BHAKTAPUR

Gutschow and Kölver

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AND
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ORDERED SPACE
CONCEPTS AND FUNCTIONS
IN A TOWN OF NEPAL

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WITH 16 PLATES AND 3 MAPS

Preface

The present essay is an attempt to outline the relations between tangible functions and abstract concepts in a Hindu city. Object of our study is the town of Bhaktapur (formerly Bhatgaon), Nepal[1], a place which has not yet been greatly affected by westernization.

Mediaeval Hindu cities reflected a certain view of the body politic. Since the very concept of Hindu society is organized around the principle of Hierarchy, we should expect to see this principle mirrored in the city. And since hierarchy itself is rooted in religion, and constantly renewed in ritual, religion and ritual should be reflected in the distribution of urban space. Patterns of this type are still preserved in Bhaktapur, and the authors are persuaded that spatial distribution in Hindu towns cannot be properly understood unless society and religion are taken into account. Conversely, a description of society and religion which does not take notice of localizations of castes or cults will in our opinion forgo essential evidence. The ground plan of a city like Bhaktapur is meant to visualize highly abstract notions. Thus, certain shrines or temples are not completely understood if viewed as isolated facts : often they are parts of systems, and in such cases are more than self-contained places for worship - though they of course serve that purpose. Over and beyond that, the system in itself is meant to establish very definite claims : the space enclosed by the entire group is set off from its surroundings, is sanctified.

Relations of this type are often not perceived. If Hindu cities are to be described with their underlying systems in view, then spatial and cultural interpretations will have to be combined : the results of one approach will be complementary to the other.

But the authors should be very sorry if their description was taken as nothing but another account of a cultural system now threatened by destruction. The threat is a very real one. Until now, modernization has touched but the fringe of a town which, in spite of some external deterioration, is still essentially sound - sound, that is, in its social functions; sound in the sense that it offers a tolerable life to its people : if not plentiful, at least free

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1) The following pages are but a preliminary synopsis of the results of a more comprehensive study which is under preparation. Work on this is supported by the German Research Council (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft). Data have been collected by GUTSCHOW in 1971, during the Pūjārī Maṭh restoration, and by GUTSCHOW and KÖLVER since February, 1974. In spring, 1974, the Taumāḍhī Square - Maśān Ghāṭ area was surveyed by Michael WUNDER, who prepared the ground plans and the elevation. In the task of collecting information, we have been materially assisted by many inhabitants of Bhaktapur. Chief among them was Krishna Prasad SHRESHTHA, Director, National Gallery, Bhaktapur, who has put us under great obligation by sharing his profound knowledge with us.

from abject misery; if not reflecting Western ideas of the Equality of Man, at least integrating all its inhabitants into a stable whole.

Some degree of modernization is inevitable and indeed vital. We would hope that planning for development will not lose view of the fact that within a system, change in one place will trigger other changes; we would wish that planners will at least attempt to gauge the probable effects of an initial alteration. To give a concrete example. The people of Bhaktapur use the streets and lanes and squares of their town for various agricultural and commercial purposes : grain is threshed and winnowed, spun thread is processed, etc. Most public thoroughfares are at present not wide enough for lorries or cars. Town planning which aims at turning them into motorable roads will be disastrous as long as it does not, at the same stage, provide alternative space to keep the town's agriculture going; agriculture is, after all, the main source of income in Bhaktapur and as such cannot bear any impediments.

Deficient planning is all too frequent. Western experts usually have but a perfunctory acquaintance with the cultural presuppositions of the countries they are working in. Their counterparts from the developing countries, often western-trained, sometimes do not wish to appear traditionalist; equating tradition with backwardness, they too readily yield to suggestions which set their own cultural heritage at nought.
The only escape from this dilemma is to present the axioms of a culture in a comprehensible way, and to work out some of the implications these axioms will have to the community that shares them. An attempt to disentangle an incomprehensible conglomeration, and to show the system behind a mass of seemingly disjunct facts, might help experts to realize that very good reasons usually lie behind what are, apparently, queer and peculiar patterns of behaviour. In this sense, a description of the kind we aim at will have bearings that are anything but antiquarian.

Darmstadt/Köln,
April, 1975   N.G.   B.K.

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हिन्दू विचारधारा अनुसार शहरी योजना, शहर र अनि त्यसैले गाउँ भन्नु पनि केवल घरहरूको समूह मात्र होइन ः यिनबाट त्यहाँका बासि-न्दाहरूको शारीरिक एवं दार्शनिक दुवै कुराको रक्षा हुन्छ । यस विचारधारा अनुसार शहरहरूले ब्रह्माण्डलाई प्रतिबिम्बित गर्नुपर्दछ । शहरहरू भन्नु देवताहरूका वासस्थान हुन् । यिनलाई खुला फाँटबाट अलग्याउने यही नै मुख्य लक्षण हो र यस अनुसार कुन ठाउँ कुन देवता वा देवीद्वारा संरक्षण गरिएको छ देखाउन सांध-सीमानाको आवश्यकता पर्दछ । सांध-सीमाना भनेको घेरैकाल अघि देखि नै भएको कुरो हुनुपर्दछ किन भने भिन्नै भिन्नै प्रकारका घेरै संस्कृतिहरूमा यो कुरो पाइन्छ ।

छोटकरीमा, हाल संचालन गरिएको अध्ययनको एउटा लक्ष्य काठमाडौं उपत्यकाका पुराना राजाहरूको शहरहरू मध्ये कुनै एउटालाई लिने र यसको निर्माणमा उपरोक्त परम्परागत हिन्दू विचारधाराको कहाँसम्म प्रभाव परेको छ पत्ता लगाउनु हो । त्यसैले यस अध्ययनको लागि भक्तपुरलाई लिएको छ किनभने यसको वर्तमान स्थितिमा पाश्चात्य विचारधाराको कुनै प्रभाव परेको छैन । पाश्चात्य विचारधाराको प्रभावबाट परिवर्तन आउनु भन्दा अघि नेपालमा शहरहरूको योजना कुन किसिमबाट हुन्थ्यो भन्ने कुरो पत्ता लाग्न यसको अध्ययनबाट घेरै सम्भावना छ ।

तर केवल आज के कस्तो स्थिति छ सो वर्णन गर्दैमा खास सार निकालन सकिने छैन । सबैलाई थाहा भएकै कुरो हो भक्तपुर शुरू देखि नै राजा बस्ने गरेको शहर थिएन । राजा आनन्द मल्लले त्यहाँ आफ्नो दरबार बनाउनु भन्दा अघि देखिनै त्यहाँ मानिसहरूको बस्ती थियो भन्ने कुरो अभिलेखहरूबाट देखिन्छ । राजा र उनका दरबारियाहरूको उपस्थितिबाट मानिसहरूको बस्तीको इज्जतै बढ्दछ । शहरको रक्षाको लागि सबभन्दा उपयुक्त मन्दिरहरू बनाउने र जात्राहरू शुरू गर्ने सम्बन्धमा पुरोहितहरूले सल्लाह दिन थाल्दछन् । ती मन्दिरहरू र जात्राहरूमा विभिन्न समयमा चलेका धार्मिक विचारधाराहरूको छाप परेको हुन्छ । भिन्न भिन्न समयमा भिन्नै भिन्नै देवतालाई इष्टदेवता मानिएको हुन्छ । त्यसकारण आजका ती मन्दिरहरूले अतीतका विभिन्न ऐतिहासिक कालहरूको प्रतिनिधित्व गरेका हुन्छन् ।

प्रस्तुत पुस्तिकाले यसका लेखकहरूले जर्मन अनुसन्धान परिषद्को सहयोगबाट तयार गर्न लागिरहेको विस्तृत अध्ययनको पूर्व-झलक पनि दिन्छ । हाम्रो यस प्रकाशनमा अध्ययनबाट निस्केका कुराहरूलाई सम्पूर्ण रूपमा प्रस्तुत गर्न खोजिएको छैन, केवल यस किसिमका अध्ययनहरूको आधार-भूत सिद्धान्तहरू सम्म प्रब्ट्याउन खोजिएको छ । नेपाली विद्वद्वर्गको विचार जान्नलाई सम्म यसलाई यति चाँडो प्रकाशनमा ल्याइएको छ ।

हाम्रो विचारमा ठाउँको प्रबन्धमा सामाजिक एवं धार्मिक तथ्यहरूको कस्तो छाप परेको छ त्यसको अध्ययनको विशेष महत्व छ । यो कुरो शायद वस्तुशास्त्रका मूल पुस्तकहरूमा नभएको कुरो पनि होइन र अध्ययनबाट देखिएको छ घेरै जसो देवस्थल वा पीठहरू जथाभावी जहाँ पायो उहीं बनाइएका छैनन् । दृष्टान्तस्वरूप भक्तपुरमा ३ वटा गणेशहरूको एउटा समूह छ जसलाई त्रिकुण्ड गणेश भनिन्छ । यी हुन् वलाखु गणेश, चलाखु गणेश र मुलाखु गणेश । यी तीनवटालाई गणेशको उपासनासित सम्बन्धित भिन्नै भिन्नै पीठको रूपमा लिन सकिन्छ र तिनीहरूको सोही रूपमा प्रयोग भएको छ । बिहान-बिहान घेरै मानिसले ती तीनैवटाको पूजा गर्दैनन् । तिनमध्ये एउटैको मात्र पूजा गर्दछन् । अनि तिनको त्रिकुण्ड गणेश नामबाट सो तीनवटै स्थलहरू आपसमा सम्बन्धित छन् र तिनीहरू एउटै पद्धतिका अंगहरू हुन् भन्ने कुरो मात्र सकिन्छ । यस अर्थमा ती पीठहरूको मात्र होइन सो त्रिकोण भित्रको ठाउँको पनि महत्व छ । सामाजिक बनोट वा यसको सिद्धान्तको जहाँसम्म सम्बन्ध छ यस विस्तृत अर्थमा यो वास्तविक कुरो पनि छ । परम्परा अनुसार ब्राह्मणहरू सो त्रिकुण्ड गणेशद्वारा घेरिएको त्रिकोण भित्र बस्नु पर्दछ । र घेरै हद सम्म यो परम्परा अनुसारै भएको पाइ छ ।

हाल तयार हुन लागिरहेको विस्तृत ग्रन्थमा यस सिद्धान्त (जसलाई स्थान शुद्धीकरणको सिद्धान्त भन्न सकिन्छ) का आरू थप दृष्टान्तहरू मात्र समावेश गरिने छैनन् बल्कि धार्मिक विधि-विधानलाई पनि बराबर ऐतिहासिक प्रमाणको रूपमा पनि प्रयोग गर्न सकिन्छ भन्ने दर्शाईने छ । यसलाई दृष्टान्तद्वारा घेरै स्पष्ट गर्न सकिन्छ । बराबर शहर घुम्ने प्रदक्षिणामार्ग सम्भवतः शुरूमा शहरी क्षेत्रको सीमाना थियो । अहिलेको भक्तपुरबाट यो कुरा स्पष्ट हुँदैन । दृष्टान्तको लागि यस पुस्तकमा चर्चा गरिएको क्षेत्र उत्तरमा टौमढी चोक र दक्षिणमा मशानघाटद्वारा सीमाबद्ध मेरू-दण्ड हो । प्रदक्षिणामार्गले यसलाई टौमढी चोकको दक्षिण भागमा काटेको छ । समकालीन बस्तीको ढाँचाबाट गः हिटी चोक र यसको दक्षिणवर्ती क्षेत्र कुनै समयमा शहरी सीमाना देखि बाहिर पर्दथ्यो भन्ने दावीको पुष्टि भएको पाइन्न । टौमढी चोक र गः.हिटी चोकको बीचमा प्रदक्षिणामार्गको ठीक वायाँ तर्फ नृसिंहको मन्दिर छ र यसलाई जयस्थिति मल्लले स्थापना गरिएको भनिन्छ । वस्तुशास्त्र अनुसार विष्णुका अवतारहरू मध्ये नृसिंहको मन्दिर मात्र शहर भित्र नबनाई यसको सीमानामा बनाउनु भनिन्छ, र यो हिन्दू परम्पराको पालना गर्न चाहने भक्तपुरका राजाहरू मध्ये एउटै राजा जय-स्थितिमल्ल मात्र थिए । यसैले सो नृसिंहको मन्दिरले पक्कै पनि टौमढी चोकमा प्रदक्षिणामार्ग प्राचीन शहरी क्षेत्रको सीमानामा पर्दथ्यो भन्ने देखाउँ-दछ । अनि टौमढी चोकनिरबाट पार भै जाने प्रदक्षिणामार्गको भागको ठीक ठीक काल बताउन पनि यसबाट हामीलाई मद्दत मिल्दछ ।

पाश्चात्य विद्वानहरूले नेपालमा मात्र होइन भारतभा पनि ऐतिहासिक स्रोतहरूको अभावको बराबर गुनासो गरेका छन् । उपरोक्त उदा- हरणबाट धार्मिक विधि-विधानलाई पनि कहिले काहीं ऐतिहासिक अध्ययनको सम्बन्धमा तथ्यको रूपमा प्रयोग गर्न सकिन्छ भन्ने देखाउँदछ र वास्त- वमा त्यसरी प्रयोग पनि गरिनु पर्दछ । बराबर हामी कुनै कुनै धार्मिक विग्रिहरूको ठीक ठीक काल बताउन पनि असर्थ हुनेछौं र साथै त्यसको आधा- रमा निर्धारण गरिएको सौंध-सीमानाको काल तोक्न पनि नसक्ने हुनेछौं । तै पनि यसबाट हामीलाई कालक्रमसम्म यकीन गर्न भए पनि आवश्यक तथ्यहरू प्राप्त हुनेछन् ।

तर यसबाट हाम्रो भनाई प्रदक्षिणाको चलन अथवा आरू कुनै धार्मिक विधिको शुरूबाट ऐतिहासिक उद्देश्य पूर्तिको लागि भएको थियो भन्ने होइन । वास्तवमा ती धार्मिक विधिसम्म हुन् । तर साथै तिनबाट प्रसंगवश त्यस्तो चलन हुन थालेको समयको सामाजिक स्थिति पनि झल्कन आराउँछ । आर्को उदाहरणको लागि, भक्तपुरको नवदुर्गा नाच भक्तपुर शहर भित्रका टोल टोलमा मात्र देखाइन्न, ठिमी, बोडे र टोखा जस्ता आनेकन आरू साना साना ठाउँमा पनि देखाइन्छ । तर त्यो नाच वर्षेनी आरू ठाउँमा जस्तै पाटन र काठमाडौंमा देखाइन्न । यसको आउटै आर्थ हुन सक्छ त्यो नाचको शुरू गर्ने राजा (शायद सुवर्ण मल्ल थिए) ले त्यस नाचलाई आफ्नो राज्यको इलाका भित्र पर्ने ठाउँहरूमा मात्र प्रदर्शनको लागि पठाउने गरेका थिए । यसरी परम्पराको ठीक ठीक आर्थ लगाउन सकिएमा कुनै ऐतिहासिक प्रमाण प्राप्य नभए तापनि सुवर्ण मल्लको राज्यको सम्बन्धमा नवदुर्गा नाचबाट निकै कुरो थाहा पाउन सकिन्छ ।

पुस्तिकाको आधिकांश भाग भक्तपुरको एक खास इलाका, टौमढी चोक-मशानघाट मेरूदण्डको चर्चामा लगाइएको छ । यस इलाकालाई लिइएको छ किनभने घेरै कारणहरूले गर्दा यो इलाका आत्यन्तै रोचक जचिन्छ । पहिलो कारण, भक्तपुरको सबभन्दा ठूलो बिस्केट जात्रा यसै इला- कामा हुन्छ । आनि आरू पनि प्रायः सबै जसो जात्राहरू यस इलाकासित सम्बन्धित छन् । आन्त्यमा, त्यस मेरू-दण्डले त्यस शहरको सामाजिक वर्गी- करण पनि प्रतिबिम्बित गर्दछ । (तेस्रो नकशामा देखाइएको श्रृंखला चित्र हेर्नुहोस्) । न्याटपोला मन्दिरबाट शुरू गरेर तल खोलातिर झर्दैं पहिले आउँछ छयरियाहरूको घर, त्यसपछि पाँचथरियाहरूको, त्यसपछि ज्यापूहरूको र आखिरमा खोलाको तीरैनिर पोडेटोल आउँछ । पोडेहरू खास शह- रको बाहिर बस्दछन् । धार्मिक गुठी-गांठाहरू (मन्दिर, पीठहरूले देखाए आनुसार) जमीनको उचाई र सो स्थानका बासिन्दाहरूको सामाजिक स्थिति आनुसार घट्दैं गएको पाइन्छ । स्थानीय भौगोलिक स्थिति, धार्मिक गुठी-गांठा, र सामाजिक स्थिति यी ३ कुराको बीचमा यस्तो नजीकको परस्परको सम्बन्ध हुनु आत्यन्तै विचित्रको कुरो हो । यो कुरो आझैं विचित्र लाग्दछ किनभने भक्तपुर जयपुर शहरको छाँटले योजनाबद्ध तरीकाले बसा- लिएको थिएन, यसको एकात्मक आस्तित्व इतिहासको क्रममा बनेको थियो । आरू विस्तृत विवरणको लागि आंग्रेजी मूलग्रन्थ हेर्नु हुन हामी पाठकसित आनुरोध गर्दछौं ।

आन्त्यमा हामी हाम्रो यस आध्ययनका लक्ष्यहरूको सम्बन्धमा आरू १/२ कुरा भन्न चाहन्छौं । यिनीहरू न वैज्ञानिक हुन् न वर्णनात्मक । आउँदो वर्षहरूमा विदेशबाट आउने प्राविधिज्ञहरू सित भक्तपुरको आझ नजीकको सम्पर्क हुन आउने छ । ती प्राविधिज्ञहरूसित नेपाल समाजको जटिल बनोट र उतिकै जटिल धार्मिक विधि-व्यवहारहरू बुझिरहने समय पनि हुँदैन र शक्ति पनि । तर यो जटिल सामाजिक एवं धार्मिक गठ-बन्धन त्यस शहरको विशेषता हो र वास्तविक स्वरूपको एक पक्ष पनि हो । नेपाली संस्कृतिमा आन्तर्निहित मूक भावनाहरूको व्याख्या गर्न हाल लेखिन लागिरहेको पुस्तक र यस्तै आरू पुस्तकहरू केही उपयोगी हुन सक्तछन् । हामी आफ्नो हृदयदेखि चाहन्छौं समयको प्रगतिको साथै यो देश संस्कृति र विज्ञानको संमिश्रण गर्न समर्थ होस्, यसकारण कि यस देशका नागरिकहरूलाई सारमय जीवन व्यतीत गर्न आर्थिक आधार मिलोस् र आजको नेपालको विशेषताको रूपमा रहेको यस देशको स्पष्ट सांस्कृतिक व्यक्तित्वका लक्षणहरू यथावत् कायमैं रहुन् । हाम्रो विचारमा प्रस्तुत किताब जस्ता किताबहरूको सीमित उपयोगिता हुन्छ । आन्ततोगत्वा कतिसम्म वैज्ञानिक प्रगतिको आवश्यकता छ र आफ्नो आस्तित्व लोप हुन नपाउने गरी कतिसम्म वैज्ञानिक प्रगतिलाई आफ्नो संस्कृतिले ग्रहण गर्न सक्तछ सो ठह्र्याउने काम त नेपाली जनताहरूकैं हुनेछ ।

1. BACKGROUND

1.1. BHAKTAPUR : A PRE-INDUSTRIAL TOWN

Bhaktapur is one of the three big towns in the Kathmandu Valley. All of them first attained prominence, as far as we know, under the Malla rulers. After the Gorkhali conquest of the Valley, in 1769, power came to be centralized and was shifted to Kathmandu. Since that time, Bhaktapur has lost most of the importance it used to have for the surrounding country (the old Kingdom of Bhatgaon extended well beyond the boundaries of the Valley). Thus, for about two hundred years, the town has suffered a gradual reduction in status. Development seems to pass it by. Enterprising citizens, and members of higher castes, tend to move either to Kathmandu or to distant centres of commerce in the Terai, in their search for jobs or for opportunities to invest money.

Today, Bhaktapur numbers about 36.000 inhabitants (5.216 households were counted under the present project). The structure of the settlement probably has not changed very much since Bhupatīndramalla's time, about 300 years ago. Its last period of greatness was in the beginning of the 18th century : the most imposing edifice, the Nyātapola Pagoda in Taumaḍhī Square, was finished in 1703.

There is not only little trace of development; the town has also suffered much from earthquakes. The worst of them occurred in 1808, 1833, and 1934. They destroyed a considerable part of its buildings, few of which are now older than 150 years. In spite of destruction, the external appearance of the city does not seem to have altered greatly. Temples usually are preserved, if only in reduced shape. The size of bricks, tiles, or windows may have changed. Many buildings have collapsed and have been rebuilt. All these changes, though, have not led to a substantial re-modelling; the basic structure of the town seems intact.

This structure is even today conditioned by pre-industrial forms of production. It is strongly influenced by ritual : religious motivation is inextricably involved in countless acts of everyday life. Thus, the same place can be used both for secular and for sacred purposes. Again, the role of the individual is largely determined by hierarchy : joint family and caste are still of decisive importance. This again results in a dichotomy between public and private spheres : the function that society assigns to an individual will not necessarily tally with his own estimate of himself.

Such dichotomies are not resolved within the social system that Bhaktapur stands for. It is the interplay between the various factors involved that will have to be observed; only a dynamic description will give a coherent and comprehensive account of urban life in a Newar town.

Bhaktapur is a well-nigh exclusively Newar settlement : all but fifty of its inhabitants are Newars. For the most part, they call themselves Hindu by religion. At times, though, it is not quite easy to say what this ascription rests on : the peculiar relation between Buddhism and Hinduism which is characteristic of Nepal has often been described.

The predominance of Hinduism in Bhaktapur seems to date back to the time when the town dominated the Valley, i.e. to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The reign of Jayasthitimalla brought great changes in this direction. Most far-reaching among them was the introduction of caste. This divided the populace into a hierarchy of 82 groups that theoretically were endogamous.

To this very day, Hinduism is a decisive factor in Bhaktapur life. This accounts for the orthodox and static character of the city. The impression of a certain backwardness, in comparison to Kathmandu, is but the corollary of the same diagnosis. It is this conservative appearance that makes Bhaktapur such a unique object for studies aiming at present-day Hindu concepts, or the survival of Hindu concepts into the present age : here we have an urban settlement that preserves Hindu notions about towns and town-planning, with their constant reference to multitudinous rituals, in a fidelity which will find few equals in South Asia.

Functions of temples and shrines are deeply rooted in the citizens' consciousness. Often, we can show that the distribution of sacred buildings is anything but fortuitous. Topographical data, social and economic facts, and the meaning that religion has assigned to them, are fused into a unity. Space, functions, and systems of their employment and interpretation form an indivisible complex. Any planning for the development of Bhaktapur will have to take this conjunction into account. Only to a casual visitor Bhaktapur will appear dirty and underdeveloped. As soon as one views the town as a social organism, a striking fact will emerge : Private poverty is compensated by public wealth. Citizens are entitled to - and do - use public

Plate   2.

[*Opposite page:*]
Bhaktapur. Division into wards. Scale 1: 10 000.
The town consists of 24 wards (nep. ṭol, newari tvaḥ), ten of which make up the Lower Town, and the remaining fourteen the Upper Town. Wards are centered round a square which usually shows an important pīṭh, a shrine sacred to Gaṇeś, and a Nāsadyo.
Boundaries between wards can be determined from the rituals after death (P. 27): each ṭol has its own route towards its ghāṭ. In earlier times, wards may have been dominated by castes or jāts.

Bhaktapur : Wards
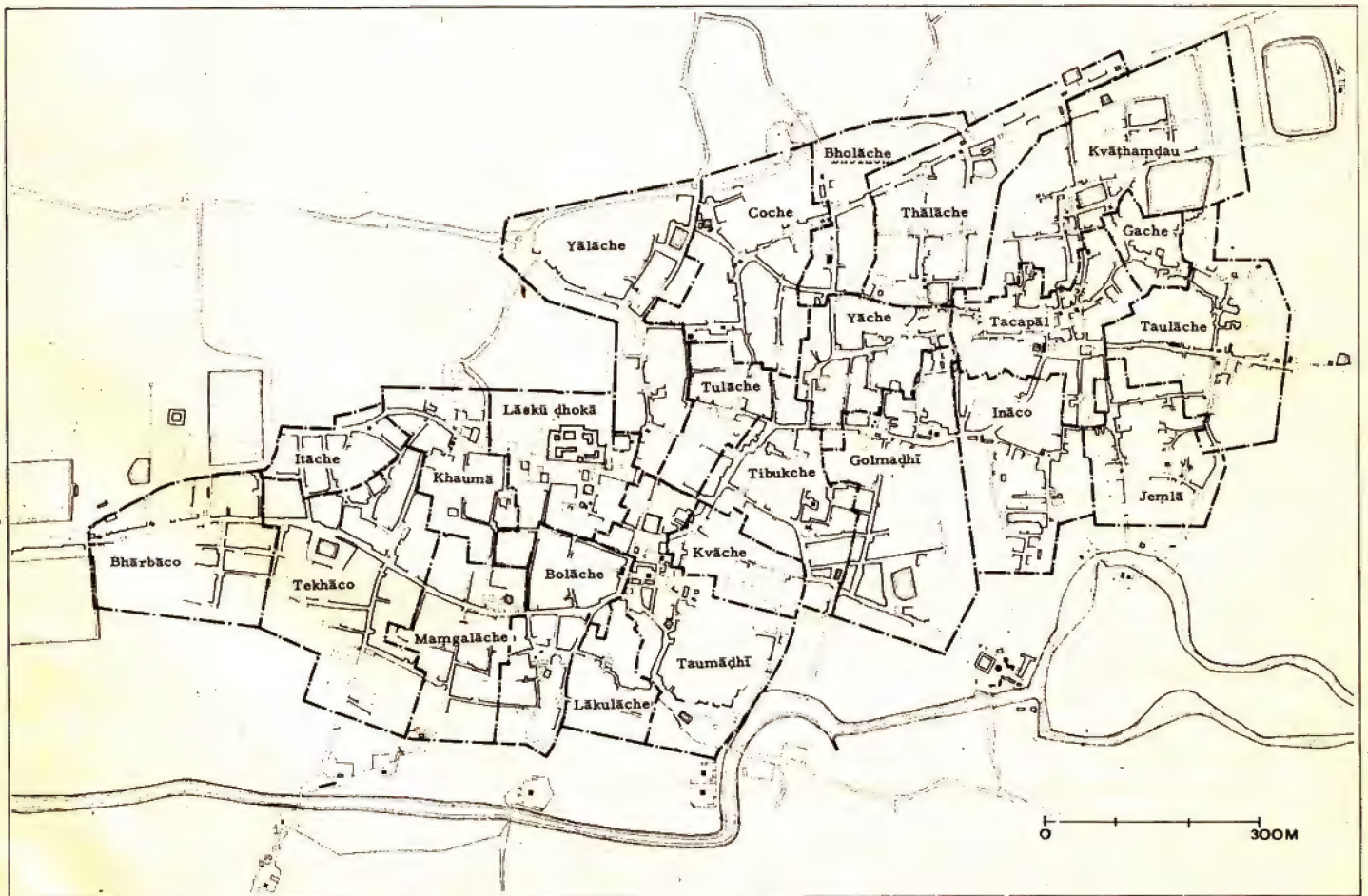
space for private purposes. Non-governmental public institutions, with certain localities as their nucleus, within certain limits provide for needy individuals. Organization may not be evident in the ways and places that we are accustomed to expect them. Still, they exist and have to be respected.

1.2.   SKETCH OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF BHAKTAPUR

Legend ascribes the foundation of Bhaktapur to Rāja Ānandadeva. Probably, though, the hill north of the Hanumante River was the site of a number of villages from about the third century onwards, when irrigation had been introduced into the Valley. Names for two such settlements have come down to us. What legend calls the *foundation* of Bhaktapur thus may well be nothing but their unification.

The early history of such villages possibly is reflected by the prominent squares which are found both in the east and in the west of Bhaktapur. They show a remarkable concentration of sacred and secular buildings. These possibly mark old crossings of roads and trade routes, with settlements developing round them.

At the earliest strata of history we can only guess, our evidence being nothing but the course of roads. More precise conclusions can be obtained from the pattern of actual building.

The main road of the town runs parallel to the Hanumante River. This road is, as it were, the axis of the city. Running some little distance below the ridge of the hill, it broadly keeps to a height of 1.330m above sea level. In irregular intervals, the road widens to form squares, the most important of which are Dattātraya Square in the east (in Tacapāl ṭol), and Taumāḍhī Square in the west (in Taumāḍhī ṭol); the latter is conjoined with an extension in southwesterly direction, called Gaḥ hiti (see Plate 4). Only a narrow lane connects Taumāḍhī Square with the royal palace in Lāskū ḍhokā. Taumāḍhī Square probably marks the old crossing between the main road of Bhaktapur and the trade route which connected the Valley with the north. Crossing the river, it ran on into the next valley (that of Banepā and Panauti), and then on towards Tibet.

We cannot say precisely at what time the western centre achieved the importance it has today. The early kings residing in Bhaktapur seem to have had their administrative centre, and their palace, in the east, in Tacapāl ṭol. Old Tacapāl place names like Vanālāyku, or the *Āgaṃcheṁ* housing Taleju, the tutelary goddess of kingship,

Plate 3.

[*Opposite page:*]
Bhaktapur. Public space : roads, lanes, and squares. *Scale* 1 : 10 000.

Wards are not monocentric, but subdivided into 'neighbourhoods'. Roads and lanes widen to form squares which are employed for agricultural, commercial, and ritual purposes.

300 M

still seem to attest to this. Again, Tacapāl ṭol is profusely endowed with temples and public buildings. Nowadays, the ward is mainly inhabited by Sāymis (Mānandhars, 'oil-pressers'), a caste which up to the beginning of the present century belonged to the untouchables. Nothing in what we know of the Sāymis' ritual function could account for the extraordinary wealth of Tacapāl ṭol. And inscriptions show that even Yakṣamalla had buildings erected in the eastern part of the town - the same Yakṣamalla to whom is due the largest single impetus towards shifting the centre of the city : it was he who in 1453 built the new royal palace in Lāskū ḍhokā. Religious and secular officials who held the important posts of his administration will have joined the king in moving westward, in accordance with the injunctions of Vāstuśāstra texts, the Indian treatises on architecture.

The religious endowment of Taumāḍhī Square will be largely consequent to this shift. Though it is not immediately adjacent to the palace, the Mallas must have taken the square as a religious centre of their kingship : it is here that Bhupatīndramalla built the temple to his tutelary goddess, the Nyātapola Pagoda.

Furthermore, the shift caused the extension of the town towards the west. The years between 1453 and 1769 are characterized by *planned growth* in that direction. Western ṭols usually have a main street running from north to south, originating in or meeting the old east-west thoroughfare. This is a regular pattern, in striking contrast to the eastern part of the city where streets seem to run in an irregular way, probably to some extent conditioned by topographical facts (see maps, Plates 2 and 3).

The main road runs parallel to the river : the thoroughfare and the Hanumante are two very prominent arteries which accentuate the direction from east to west. The most important and significant north-south axis, which connects the road with the river, leads from Taumāḍhī Square to Cupiṅ Ghāṭ and on to Maśān Ghāṭ, with its cremation ground. On this axis, nearly all rituals, groups, and castes are represented by temples, shrines, or other edifices. No procession fails to move through this area. Hence, its analysis will serve very well as a model to exemplify aspects of the sacred and ritual structure of Bhaktapur. However, before entering into a detailed description, the concept of a Sacred City will have to be outlined.

[*Opposite page:*]

Plate 4, **Bhaktapur. History: shift of centres.** *Scale* 1 : 10 000.
The east of Bhaktapur is centered round Tacapāl ṭol, with two conjoined squares round the Dattātraya Temple and the Salāṃ Ganeś pīṭh. Until the middle of the fifteenth century, this probably was the site of the royal palace.

The new palace was built close to the northwestern ridge of the hill. It is the centre of gravitation in the west. Ritual very often uses the Taumāḍhī Square – Cupiṅ Ghāṭ axis which joins the main road with the Hanumante river. This axis is the scene of performances that concern both Upper and Lower Town (Bisket Jātrā).
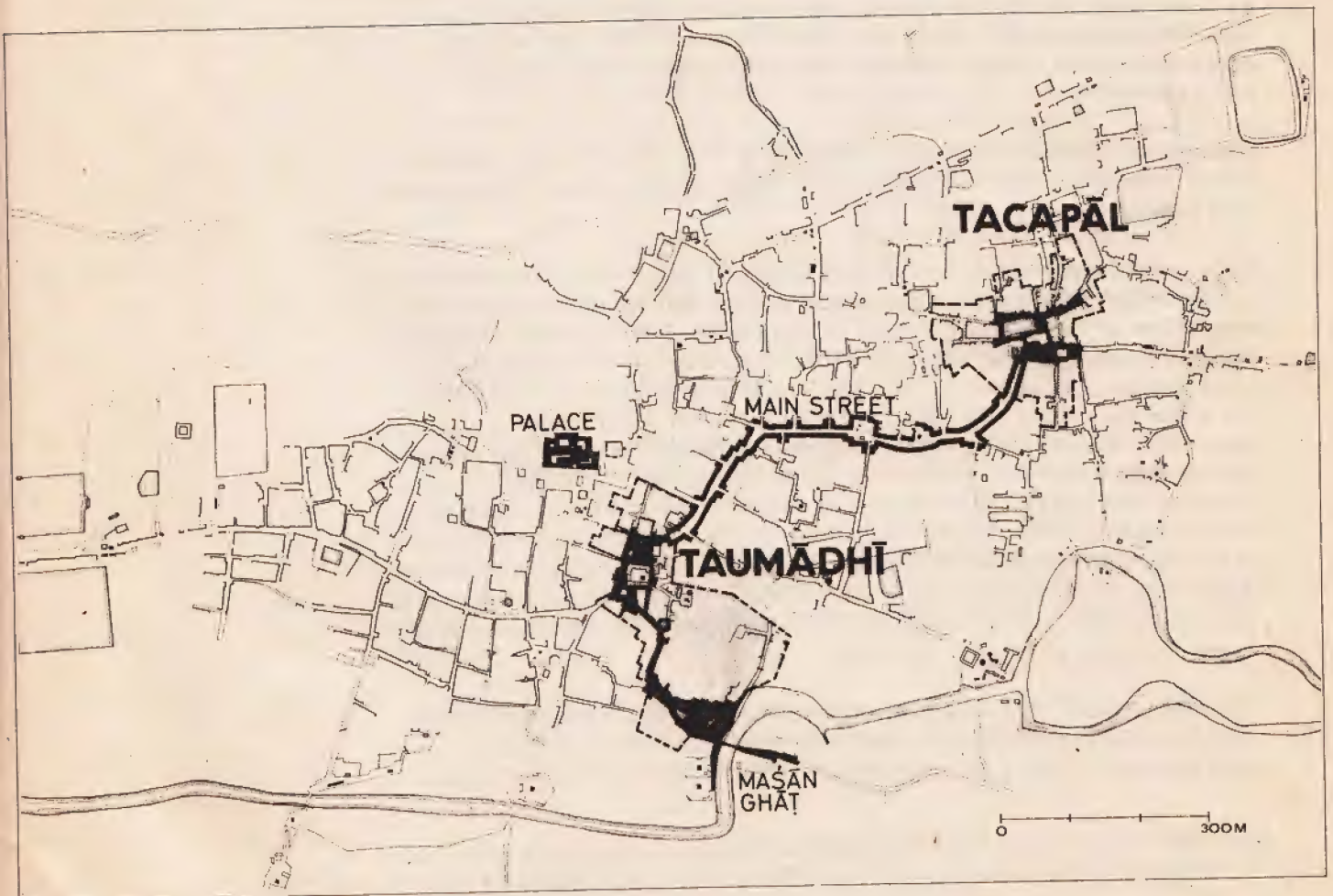
1.3.   IMPLICATIONS OF THE CONCEPT OF TOWN

Bhaktapur, we have said, is a town essentially conditioned by pre-industrial society. Hence, it is predominantly pre-industrial ideas which are reflected in its structure. If we are to trust historical semantics, it illustrates the very concept that the word 'town' originally denoted. Its cognate in German is *Zaun*, which means 'fence' or 'railing'. The great F. Max MÜLLER drew attention to the fact that Hindu towns seem to bear out this very notion. A town is a region that is, as it were, walled off from the surrounding country. Such land as was inhabited by an organized community had to be set off from the country, which was unstructured, uncultured, not 'urbanized'. The means to signal the division was some sort of wall or fence; hence the application of the word to the region surrounded. It will not be by chance that Sanskrit *pur-* means both 'wall' and 'town'.

The town of Bhaktapur probably developed from two or more villages which at some time grew together. This process is anything but unique in South Asia : *vide*, e.g., Chittagong, the old name of which was, in Sanskrit, Saptagrāma '(of) seven villages'. When separate settlements were fused to become a city, there arose the necessity to delimitate the new foundation, to set signs which marked the unity so recently established.

For such marking, there seem to have been several levels. The Valley itself provides a very instructive example for marking on a highly formalized level. We of course refer to Patan.[1]

Patan, a royal city probably from its very inception, was obviously intended to be a settlement of high religious and secular importance, and was thus subject to planning from a very early stage. The most striking feature of planning is the four large Buddhist mounds, *stūpa*s, which surround it. Marking the four cardinal points of the compass, they were meant to delimitate and sanctify the town. Local tradition has it that there was a fifth *stūpa* at Pātukhaḥ close to Maṅgal bazār, i.e. in the point where the lines intersect that ideally connect the northern with the southern and the eastern with the western *stūpa*. No matter whether this tradition does or does not reflect historical fact : what we do find in Maṅgal bazār is the royal palace. The palace, now, is not only the *administrative* centre of the city, but also, by virtue of the religious implications of Kingship, its *ideal* focus. The topography of Patan reflects this very notion. The head of the community lives and resides by the central point of the circle the circumference of which is marked by the oldest and still largest religious edifices of the town.

While Patan thus from its very beginning testifies to planning, it is doubtful whether the same claim can be upheld for Bhaktapur. And even if there was planning at a fairly early date, (there is the striking parallel between the main road and the course

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1) For the observations about Patan summarized in the following paragraphs, and indeed for many expansions, the authors are indebted to Dr Ulrich WIESNER, of the Cologne Museum of Far Eastern Art.

they circumscribe the same ground ; other parts of the city are included in the Bhairava system, but excluded from the *pradakṣiṇā*.

Disparities like these are of considerable historical interest. At first sight, Western observers may be inclined to classify notions like *pradakṣiṇā* among the facts pertaining to the history of religions, or at best the history of ideas. We think it is the very point of Hindu notions about towns that the distinction between religious and political history - or, more generally, between the religious and the secular interpretation of one and the same set of facts – is irrelevant.

The purpose of the *pradakṣiṇā*, of the *Aṣṭabhairava*, of course belongs to the realm of religion. Nevertheless, an idea like that is applied to a town at one particular moment; hence, it obviously reflects the topographical, the political conditions of that time. Thus, we are perfectly justified to *take a boundary of this type as a historical fact*. This, though, should not blind our eyes to the circumstance that a secular interpretation would have seemed very marginal to those kings or priests who installed the *pradakṣiṇā* for religious purposes. In the Hindu system of Bhaktapur, political history is, as it were, expressed in terms of religion and ritual.

As we find the town today, Bhaktapur does not bear the unmistakable stamp of any one individual ruler, though the town seems to owe more to Bhupatīndramalla than to any other king. It rather shows successive models of sanctification. New times chose new means to express their awareness of the interrelation between the sacred and the secular, found new ways to embed their individual existence and habitat into a larger context, to view their own settlement as a reflection of the universe. A few of these models can be gathered from the map of Bhaktapur shrines. Many others can be culled from the pages of the local chronicles. The Bhāṣāvaṃśāvali demonstrates how the same set of concepts, the same pattern of gods or goddesses, can be repeated again and again : the Eight Mothers we find not only surrounding Bhaktapur, but we also find them on top of the mountains surrounding the Valley; we find them a third time beyond the boundaries of the Valley proper[1]: ever widening circles circumscribe the widening sphere of influecne, circumscribe political growth. That such growth is expressed in religious terms is a very remarkable fact; it illustrates our contention that sanctification is an integral part of the Nepalese concept of space.

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1) Cf. e.g. Bhāṣāvaṃśāvali 1 (2020), p. 31f. :

प्रथम प्रावरण पीठहरू गन्धर्वद्वीप विदालक्षेत्र नदीदेवी ब्रह्मायणी सम्यकचुलीमा, गोमेदद्वीप धनदक्षेत्र रक्तादेवी माहेश्वरी वेघनचुलीमा, सरद्वीप पुण्पदन्तक्षेत्र सुमनादेवी कुमारीदेवी फुलचोचुलीमा, सूर्यद्वीप महानन्दक्षेत्र मनमतीदेवी वैष्णबीपीठ मयेनुकोटीचुलीमा, नयनद्वीप गोपालक्षेत्र कुलाकृतदेवी वाराहीपीठ नटारम्भचुलीमा, वसन्तद्वीप शोभनक्षेत्र तारावतीदेवी इन्द्रायणीपीठ लिगुचोचुलीमा, स्वर्णद्वीप चण्डिकाक्षेत्र शुभ-कीर्तिदेवी चामुण्डादेवी गन्चोचुलीमा, नरान्तद्वीप प्रीतिप्रियक्षेत्र सवरीदेवी महालक्ष्मी शिवपुरिचुलीमा ॥ द्वितीय प्रावरण पीठ। रत्नद्वीप महाकायक्षेत्र धर्मादेवी ब्रह्मायणीपीठ पनौतीमा (etc., other place names beyond the Valley.) Cāmuṇḍā is, of course, Mahākāli.— We shall revert to this passage and its symbolic interpretations elsewhere.

CHAPTER 2

ORDERED SPACE IN BHAKTAPUR

2. ORDERED SPACE IN BHAKTAPUR:
The Taumādhī Square – Maśān Ghāṭ Area

2.1. CITY SUBDIVISIONS : WARDS AND THEIR BOUNDARIES

The region between Taumādhī Square and Maśān Ghāṭ, which will be discussed in the following pages, is up to Cupiṅ Ghāṭ, i.e. the banks of the river, part of the ward (newari : *tvaḥ,* Nepālī : *ṭol*) called Taumādhī. This ward comprises :

— the square in front of the Nyāṭapola Pagoda, together with the buildings surrounding that square,
— Nārāyaṇ Cok,
— Gaḥ hiti, a smaller square south of Taumādhī Square,
— the road leading down to the river, called Lāykve,
— and finally, the big open space called Yaḥsimkhel, which adjoins the Poṛe (fishermen's) settlement.

Plate 5.

[*Opposite page:*]
Bhaktapur. Taumādhī Square.
Upper left : *Taumādhī Square viewed from northwest, with temple of Bhairavnāth. This is a three-storeyed pagoda erected over a rectangular ground plan. The sanctum, in the middle storey, is accessible only from the inner courtyard. Three platforms like the one to the right of the photograph subdivide Taumādhī Square. Goats and hens are being sold.*

Lower left : *Taumādhī Square viewed from southeast, with the five-storeyed Nyāṭapola Pagoda. This is built on a five-storeyed pedestal. It is said to be dedicated to Siddhilakṣmī.*
To the left, the magnificent front of a Dhaubhaḍel house, the ground plan of which is given on the upper right.

Upper right : *Ground plan of a Chatharīya (court officials') house [lower left]. Scale 1 : 1000. This is one of the most spacious houses of Bhaktapur, built around a courtyard of 12 by 12 metres. The compound includes a garden and an āgamcheṁ for the worship of family gods.*

Lower right : *Two-storeyed pagoda in Nārāyaṇ Cok (south of Taumādhī Square), sacred to Viṣṇu Nārāyaṇa. This is the most important of the 'Four Nārāyaṇa' (Cār Nārāyaṇ) of Bhaktapur. In front of the pagoda, pillars with the attributes of Viṣṇu : his mount, Garuḍa; his conch, śaṅkha; and his disc, cakra.*

The wards round Taumādhī are Lākulācheṁ and Bolācheṁ in the west, Lāskū ḍhokā and Tulācheṁ in the north, and Kvācheṁ in the east.

For an appreciation of the structure of Bhaktapur, some information about this system of wards is essential. Though at present the authors are not yet certain about the criteria that are essential to constitute a ward, a few traits are collected here.

The total of Bhaktapur is made up of 24 wards (see Plate 2,p.14). As a rule, a ṭol will be centered around a spacious square. This is usually paved and serves various agricultural and commercial purposes : during and after harvest, it is a threshing floor, a space for winnowing grain, for drying rice and certain other other vegetables (chillies). In potters' wards, unbaked jars or pots are placed there for drying. Women will here prepare the warp before weaving. Almost all squares are hemmed in by arcades (pauvās), where people will congregate in the evening for various social purposes; often there will be music or recitation. In most wards, the central square has a well. A temple or shrine to Gaṇeś are found in every ward; in most cases, there is a Nāsadyo : a little shrine, usually fixed in walls, often consisting of three narrow openings that adjoin each other horizontally; according to some, they are sacred to Śiva Nṛtyanātha/Naṭarāja. Many ṭols also have a temple of Viṣṇu, which sometimes is more elaborate than that of Gaṇeś. Matutinal pūjā is very often performed at the Gaṇeś shrine and thus might be ascribed to the ṭol level; many people, however, will worship at the nearest pīṭh of a Mātṛkā or Bhairava, transcending ward boundaries.

Wards are often divided into smaller units, which we have decided to call 'neighbourhoods'. Sometimes it is not easy to determine whether by a particular name people refer to a ṭol or a neighbourhood. This is because the old ṭol organization seems to have lost its function.[1] Some aspects of the problem are illustrated by the settlement of the Poṛe ('fishermen'; sweepers). As shown in Map II (lower right), their area has a Gaṇeś and a Nāsadyo in close vicinity. Two essential conditions for establishing a ward are thus fulfilled. Nevertheless, most people of Bhaktapur will say the Poṛe region is part of Taumādhī ṭol. The solution of this particular problem may well be sought in history : the Poṛe, being untouchables, originally were counted among those 'beyond the pale'; hence, their habitat was not included among the 24 wards of Bhaktapur. This is fairly certain from the fact that it is not included in the pradakṣiṇā, the circumambulation. At some later date, their region was loosely integrated into the city and then considered part of Taumādhī.

In the opinion of the present authors, a very essential clue for the determination of ward boundaries is provided by the Ways of the Dead. Bhaktapur dead are burnt chiefly in three places immediately beyond the precincts of the town : (1) in Brahmāyaṇī Ghāṭ, broadly speaking to the east of the city; (2) in Hanumān Ghāṭ, to the southeast; and (3) in Maśān Ghāṭ, south of the town. Infants who are not burnt are buried in a fourth place, called Bālaśmaśāna (Newari : macā phoṃga);

1) At present, Bhaktapur is divided into 17 wards. Their boundaries are altered frequently, to suit changing political and administrative needs or concepts.

this is situated to the northwest of the present royal palace, some 300 metres west of Indrāyaṇī pīṭh.[1])

Now there are exact prescriptions regulating, not only who has to use which ghāṭ, but also the way a corpse has to be borne to his proper place of burning. The decisive feature in this is geographical. The body of a man who belonged to a particular ward has to be carried along the way prescribed to all the members of his ward—always excepting the infants who are buried, not cremated. A fully documented account of the Ways of the Dead is being prepared by the present authors. The most remarkable fact emerging from their study is this : these ways are spread all over the city, like a network of veins, with ever finer ramifications until every house is reached. This pattern, which seems very complicated at first sight, is anything but arbitrary. In all but three cases, the boundaries of present-day wards are reflected *exactly* in the ways the dead are borne to their cremation grounds[2].

On leaving the territory of a ward, the Way of the Dead proper to that tol may of course fuse with the way of the adjacent ward. Ways from yet other tols will join. Thus the whole of Bhaktapur is, as it were, divided into three streams, leading to the three important ghāṭs. The cremation ground with the largest catchment area, comprising the entire Lower and parts of the Upper Town, is Maśān Ghāṭ : the way to it passes the Cālākhu Ganeś and then in a semi-circular bend leads through the Poṛe area towards the bridge and the cremation ground (see Map II). From its general appearance (width, state of maintenance), this road would qualify as the chief way into Bhaktapur from the South. However, it is not so used, nor is it traversed in any ritual designed for the living.

We have no reason to believe these ways were changed by ritual innovations that are in any way comparable to, say, the repreated installations of systems of gods or goddesses. Significantly, in this field the distinctions of caste are neutralized. The Ways of the Dead doubtless belong to the oldest materials that can be found for the history of Bhaktapur.

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1) There are two further Balaśmaśānas : one near Kamalpokharī, the other between Cupiṅ and Hanumān Ghāṭ.

2) It should be noted that in Kathmandu the place the funeral procession starts from is not the same for all castes. Jyāpus (peasants) are taken from their houses, Bajrācāryas (high-caste Buddhists) from their *bahāl*s ('monasteries'), Mānandhars (oil-pressers) from their *dharmaśālā*s ('houses of initiation') etc. A person who dies away from this place is carried there the most direct or most convenient way, apparently without any restrictions or prescriptions. Once arrived at his secular or spiritual 'home', ritual takes over, and the way thence to the cremation ground is minutely precribed and does not admit of variations.

2.2. TOPOGRAPHICAL DESCRIPTION

The area to be discussed in many ways reflects the social and religious patterns that are characteristic of a Hindu town. Its survey and elevation are given in Maps I-III. The following pages are meant to assist in their interpretation.

The sector begins with Taumāḍhī Square. Thence, we pass on towards Gaḥ hiti. Walking down towards the next opening, Yaḥsiṃkhel, we proceed through a lane called Lāykve. Yaḥsiṃkhel is bordered by the Hanumante River. Crossing this, we arrive at the cremation ground. Its southernmost religious edifice is the temple dedicated to Bhīmsen, called Bhīmsenthān.

On this way, we follow a slope falling by 22 m, and again ascending by about 5 m on the southern bank of the Hanumante. Taumāḍhī Square is situated 1.327,43 m above sea level. This is not the highest place in Bhaktapur, though the top of Nyātapola Pagoda, 33m above the level of the square, is the highest point in the entire city. Following our route downhill, Gaḥ hiti is more than 6 ft. lower than Taumāḍhī Square. Yaḥsiṃkhel in the north begins at a level of 1.317 m and drops down to 1.311 m at its southern boundary. The bed of the river is again six metres lower than that.

Spatially, the area is divided into a number of sections which we will follow in the succeeding description.

(a) Taumāḍhī Square :

On two sides, the northern and the eastern, Taumāḍhī Square is bordered by two of the most impressive religious buildings of Bhaktapur. The northern boundary is formed by the Nyātapola Pagoda, the largest religious edifice in the entire town (see Plate 5, lower left, p.24). Four little Gaṇeś shrines surround it. - In eastern direction, there is the huge three-storeyed Bhairavanāth temple remarkable for its rectangular ground plan (see Plate 5, upper left, p. 24). Immediately south-west of the Nyātapola Pagoda, two of the Daśamahāvidyā goddesses have their little shrines, very close to each other : Chinnamastā and Bhuvaneśvarī. - The western side of the square is dominated by the finely carved facade of a large private house belonging to a Dhaubhaḍel family (for its ground-plan, see Plate 5, upper right, p. 24).

Three platforms (*dabus*) as it were segment open space. The square itself is paved with finely hewn stone slabs. It is crossed diagonally by the main road, from north-east to south-west. We follow it to the square called Gaḥ hiti.

(b) From Taumāḍhī Square to Gaḥ hiti :

Leaving Taumāḍhī Square, we first encounter a large courtyard called Nārāyaṇ Cok. This contains the Tilamādhava, which is the second most important Vishnu temple of Bhaktapur (see Plate 5, lower right). Three pillars surround it, bearing attributes usually associated with that god : his divine mount, the *Garuḍa*, his conch (*Śaṅkha*), and his disc (*Cakra*). This temple is one of the Four Nārāyaṇas, for which see p. 43 below.

Proceeding further towards Gaḥ hiti, there is a temple dedicated to the God of Earthquakes, Bhūkadyo.[1] In its present shape, it is a one-storeyed edifice, incongruously erected over an immense three-storeyed platform (see Plates 7 and 9, lower left *and* lower right), pp.32 and 36). The poor appearance of the present building

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1) After the 1934 earthquake, the Bhūkadyo was shifted to Maśān Ghāṭ, and a Narasiṃha image was restored to the Bhūkadyo temple.

(note the roof made of corrugated iron !) testifies to its recent origin. The old temple, destroyed in the 1934 earthquake, was a two-storeyed pagoda proportionate in size to the pedestal. It must have very effectively arrested the view from Taumādhī Square.

In former times, with the temple still intact, nothing but a narrow thoroughfare connected the two adjoining squares. Even today, with the Bhūkadyo almost gone, an observer standing in Taumādhī will not see the ground of Gaḥ hiti, because of the slope. Both these factors, drop in height and narrowness of lane, seem to indicate an intentional boundary. Topographical data in this spot actually run counter to the needs of the city. For the lane is hardly wide enough to admit the passage of the huge chariots of Bhairava and Bhadrakālī which are pulled that way during the Bisket Jātrā festival : they will invariably bump against the Bhūkadyo pedestal.

The way between Taumādhī Square and Gaḥ hiti is further marked by a little shrine to Bandi Bināyak, who some say is one of the 'Eight Gaṇeś's' (Aṣṭagaṇeśa).[1] Then there is a stone sacred to Bhairava, which is one of the three 'tongue stones' svaṃga lohāṃ). Further, we find another sacred stone, representing Krodhabhairava, one of the 'Eight Bhairavas' (Aṣṭabhairava) (see Plate 13, p. 46). Finally, a Śiva temple in śikhara style stands right in front of Jangam Math, which is the largest math in Bhaktapur.

(c) Gaḥ hiti :

Gaḥ hiti is much less plentifully endowed than Taumādhī Square. Within the pedestal of the Bhūkadyo temple, there is a little cave opening towards the south (recognizable in Plate 7, p. 32). It contains the Pātāl Gaṇeś. This is the northern boundary of Gaḥ hiti. The eastern side has a Bhairava. In the square itself, we find a pedestal-perhaps the remnants of a temple—with a Viṣṇu and a Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa image. The square is of irregular shape, sloping towards the south, and narrowing very gradually until it turns into Lāykve lane. During and after harvest, Gaḥ hiti is used for threshing, winnowing, and drying. Almost the entire area will then be covered with mats, leaving only narrow paths for passage.

(d) From Gaḥ hiti to Yaḥsiṃkhel :

In westerly direction, a small lane leads from Gaḥ hiti into Lākulācheṃ ward. The main street, Lāykve, goes on towards Yaḥsiṃkhel. It is bounded by houses of three storeys; their horizontal dimensions are strongly emphasized by eaves or roofs projecting above their second storey.

Half way down, Lāykve opens to form a small square. The largest part of this is taken up by a little pond (new. pukhū, nepālī pokharī). From then on, Lāykve shows unmistakable signs of its ritual use : during the New Year festival in April, at Bisket Jātrā, the chariots of Bhairava and Bhadrakālī have to pass though this lane in their way from Taumādhī square to Cupiṅ Ghāṭ. First, there is the little widening in Lāykve (see Maps I and II). This is to let the chariot of Bhairava pass that of Bhadrakālī, which happens on the fourth day of the festival, the last day of the year. Then,

1) This attribution is doubtful.

both sides of the well-paved road are marked by wide gutters (see plates 7 and 9, pp. 32 and 36). They help to control and direct the thick, unwieldy wooden wheels of the chariots.

(e) Yaḥsiṃkhel :

About 45 m south of the pond, Lāykve lane suddenly widens and opens into Yaḥ-siṃkhel. This is, in Newārī, also called Bhelakhyaḥ 'Bhairava Square'. It is a wide, field-like space, of roughly triangular shape. From Lāykve, it slopes down towards the river; the inclination at first is fairly steep, but eases off after a short distance. In a sense, this region may be called the end of the city : from here, the count-ryside will open to the eye of the observer. The river itself is invisible. (See Plate 11, p. 40, above).

The upper part of the open space is paved and surrounded by three-storey houses. Approaching the river, pavement ceases, the ground being sheer clay. Of buildings, there is nothing but a long wall and, towards the east, the little huts inhabited by the Poṛe ('fishermen', sweepers) : they traditionally have but one storey and are thatched with straw (see Plate 6, upper left and below, p. 30).

Of religious buildings and sites, we find Kālī represented in the upper northern corner by one of the small stone structures typical for all goddesses of the Daśamahāvidyā group. Close to it, there is the arcade (pauvā) of a social institution (guthi) of some Jyāpus (peasants); then, a house for public use, a sattal, which belongs to one of the big maths ('monasteries') of Bhaktapur : the Pūjārī Maṭh of Tacapāl Ward. This sattal is nowadays inhabited by two families of Kusle ('tailor') caste.

A paved path, somewhat elevated, partitions the lower section of Yaḥsiṃkhel. It leads to a circular mound : boulders are piled up to form the base of the big pole

Plate 6.

[Opposite page:]
Poṛe Ward.
Upper left : *'Poṛe ṭol' south of Taumāḍhī, close to the river, between Pasikhel and Cupiṅ Ghāṭ viewed from northeast.*
This ward is inhabited by 73 families of a caste which until very recently was socially immobile and confined to its quarters. Orginally fishermen by calling, they also work as sweepers and basket makers. Regulations restricted their houses to one storey; they were to be built from unburnt bricks and to be thatched with straw. Nowadays, through the effects of the Nepalese constitution and economic changes, houses occasionally show two storeys and tiled roofs.

Upper right : *Ground plan of Poṛe Ward. Scale 1 : 1000. In contrast to crowded Jyāpu (peasants') settlements, the Poṛe life in detached houses which but occa-sionally unite into rows. Compounds often include walled enclosures for pigs and ducks, domestic animals typical for this region.*

Below : *Poṛe Ward seen from southeast, across the Hanumante river. In the background, the roofs of Nyātapola Pagoda and the temple of Bhairavnāth.*

('*liṅga*') which is annually erected at Bisket Jātrā, the New Year Festival . In its immediate vicinity, and in functional connection with it, there is a little pond called *khyaḥ pukhu* 'Pond of the Square'. Here people soak the forked boughs which are used as temporary props in the erection of the *liṅga*. Raised upon a pedestal about 8 ft high, there is an open hall of octagonal shape, the Cyāsilim,'eight-corner', maṇḍap (see Plate 11, lower left., p. 40). Before the earthquake of 1934, this was a three-storeyed building. Proceeding towards the river, we encounter the pīṭh of Bhadrakālī or Vaiṣṇavī, one of the 'Eight Mothers' (*Astamātṛkā*) : an unpretentious one-storey structure which replaces the two-storeyed pagoda of the time before the earthquake. Opposite of this pīṭh, there is another *sattal.*

In western direction, the lower part of Yaḥsimkhel is bounded by a wall about 20 m long. This wall formerly had a projecting roof to protect the trunks of trees which were used at Bisket Jātrā. Behind this wall, we find the region usually called Cupiṅ Ghāṭ. It is adorned by two Śivālayas ('houses to Śiva').

South of the Vaiṣṇavī pith, on the *hither* side of the river, and immediately by its banks, there is a number of spots where some of the lower castes cremate their dead, e.g. the Kasāī (butchers) and the Sāymi (oil-pressers).

(f) Maśān Ghāṭ

On the southern bank of the river, there is the cremation ground used by the Western part of Bhaktapur, with all its customary attributes. Further, we find two little temples, dedicated, the one again to Bhūkadyo, the god of Earthquakes [1], the other to Bhīmsen. Nine *digudyo*s are embedded into the grassy ground : seven of them are small stone slabs, finely hewn, most of them with inscriptions, with a triangular top; two are larger structures. They represent gods of clans (*kuladevatā*s) which are to be worshipped during Divali. The shrine of Sarasvatī is unusual in that it also accommodates Rurubhairava, one of the 'Eight Bhairavas' (*Aṣṭabhairava*), who is painted onto the outer wall of the Sarasvatī shrine,[2]) and Tārā, one of the Daśamahāvidyā goddesses, whose image is fitted into its southern wall. A wide and accurately paved road leads through the Maśān Ghāṭ area.

1) This is the Bhūkadyo shifted from Taumāḍhī Square : see p. 28, note 1.
2) Both on topological and typological grounds we feel doubtful about this identification. A member of the Aṣṭabhairava group outside the boundaries of the city proper would be most unusual, and the other seven Bhairavas of this system are made from stone, not painted. Ratna Raj Sharma is of the opinion that the painting referred to does not belong to the Aṣṭabhairava at all.

Plate 7.

[*Opposite page:*]
Lāykve and Gaḥ hiti viewed from southeast.

Aerial photograph. Between Gaḥ hiti and the main road, the temple of Bhūkadyo on a two-storey pedestal. In the main road, to the left of the temple, the chariot of Bhairava can be distinguished : this is its position on the tenth day of the New Year (2030 Vikram Samvat ;=April 18, 1973).

Note the beginning dissolution in the silhouette: traditional gabled roofs, with an inclination of 36°, are replaced by sloping roofs of corrugated iron.

2.3.   FUNCTIONS IN SPACE

In the preceding, the Taumādhī Square - Maśān Ghāt area has, as it were, been catalogued, and the enumeration of buildings will have made fairly clear that both its end and its beginning are marked with special distinctness. The arrangement of buildings presents a very consistent appearance; topographical conditions have very elegantly been turned into a sequence that is satisfactory both in an aesthetic and in a functional sense. Secular purposes of the wards are met, and even a purely technical appraisal by present-day standards will note serious difficulties only in a very few spots.

However, we know from Indian treatises on architecture and town planning that considerations of efficiency were anything but decisive in the planning of Hindu towns. This is not to say that ancient architects entirely disregarded deliberations of this nature; it does mean, though, that reflections about secular functions were embedded into a larger context, or that ancient concepts of function differed from ours in that they tried to meet, not secular purposes merely, but also their social and religious interpretations. And it is such interpretations that the sequence of buildings along our axis reflects in a striking manner. We propose to illustrate this by taking up two fields. The first is the Elevation given as Map III together with its commentary. The second will be an attempt to outline briefly how religion is manifested within a given area. Both will of necessity be brief : within the scope of the present paper, we cannot present the materials that our conclusions rest on.

2.3.1. SPATIAL REFLECTION OF SOCIAL ORDER

On the face of it, the Elevation of Map III gives a cross section through a part of Bhaktapur which demonstrates the height of buildings, and their degree of elaboration. Both of them decrease with the distance from the centre at Taumādhī Square. On closer examination this turns out to be an ordered sequence, not only in space, but also with respect to social structure. The social status of inhabitants is expressed by their greater or lesser proximity to the centre of the city. Thus the Elevation is, as it were, the image of a cross section through the Newar society of Bhaktapur.

The principle of settlement by caste is of course anything but foreign to mediaeval Hinduism : many Śilpaśāstra texts, many chapters in the Purāṇas provide instruction on how the diverse members of the social body ought to be distributed within a city. In their details, such injunctions differ widely from each other. Still, it is quite clear from the texts that ordinances of this type tried to combine two different, and

Plate   8.

[*Opposite page:*]
Maśān Ghāt, seen from the north.
Two groups of men cremate a member of their Sanā guthi. In front of the left group, a platform about two metres long used for laying out corpses before cremation.

indeed to some extent conflicting, aims. A town was not only to provide an efficient solution to the citizens' everyday needs (though deliberations about sanitation, light, also about commerce etc. are by no means omitted from such treatises)—it was also to express the interpretation of the universe that Mediaeval Hinduism had developed; it is a declared aim of Hindu town planning during the Middle Ages to realize and embody transcendental concepts within the framework of a town.

Ordinances of this type doubtless have played their part in the formation of Bhaktapur. But the Elevation shows that there was a further aspect which went into its making : *absolute height* of plots and number of storeys also were conditioning factors; they may indeed have modified the prescribed design.

The natural slope of the terrain is an integral part of the general lay-out of the city. When Yakṣamalla built his new palace in Lāskū ḍhokā, shifting from the eastern centre in Tacapāl tol, he must have triggered a process of radical re-settlement. It stands to reason that the people directly involved in the religious and secular administration of his kingdom will have been the first to follow him to the western part of the town, and it is in precise agreement with the demands of architectural treatises that we find the higher castes settling in the immediate vicinity of the palace. This arrangement is largely preserved to this very day.

Thirteen (of a total of 26) Brahmin families live exactly opposite (i.e. south of) the palace. (The steep declivity to the north of the palace precludes any settlement in that direction.) The remaining twelve Brahmin families have their houses in Khaumā, Bolāchem and Yāchem wards, thus forming a crescent round the palace; one family lives in the east, on the Tacapāl – Jnāco boundary.

Plate 9.

[Opposite page:]
Bisket Jātrā : Chariots

Upper left : *Apr. 10, 1974. The chariots of Bhairava (right) and of Bhadrakālī (left background) stand in Taumāḍhī Square. The Betāl image has been fetched from its house (dyochem) behind the Ehairavnāth temple; it is now venerated on its platform (dabu): see also Plate 12. After the ceremony, a Sāymi (Mānandhar, oil-presser) will take willow twigs and tie the image to the pole of the chariot of Bhairava. - The dabu is used only this afternoon, during the entire year.*

Lower left : *With great pains, Bhairava's chariot is pulled from the main road to Gaḥ hiti. Here it remains until New Year's Eve.*

Lower right : *People venerating the image of Betāl which is fixed to the pole of Bhairava's chariot. Meanwhile, the Bhairava image has been carried into its temporary dyochem in Lākulāchem ward.*

Upper right : *April 16, 1974 (i.e. third day of the New Year, 2031 Vikram Samvat). The chariots of Bhadrakālī and of Bhairava meet in Gaḥ hiti. With joyous shouts, they are rammed against each other. Tāntriks take this contact to symbolize the union of Śiva (Bhairava) with his Śakti (female energy), Bhadrakālī.*

The social group just below the Brahmins are the Chathariya castes. They not only served as officials to the court, but were also eligible for marrying into the royal family. 545 families belong to this group in present-day Bhaktapur. Most of them live in Khaumā, Bolāchem̐, the northern part of Taumādhī, Tulāchem̐, Tibukchem̐, and Cochem̐ wards, enclosing the palace in a semicircle[1]. Chathariya castes tend to settle together. Thus, Amātyas have their houses in Sukul ḍhokā (which is part of Tibukchem̐ ward), or in Mūlakhu (part of Maṅgalāchem̐); or, Dhaubhaḍel families have settled in Taumādhī; or, Hāḍā clans are found in Ichu, which is a neighbourhood within Lāskū ḍhokā ward. Only the Joṣī (astrologers) run counter to this pattern : they are the only Chathariya group which is scattered over a fairly wide area. Their houses range from Tekhāco tol in the west to Ināco tol in the east, with a centre in Bolāchem̐.

Pañcthariya castes, who in the social hierarchy follow upon the Chathariya, are also centered around the new palace, though some groups of this level are found in the east of the city : most of the Banepālī e.g. have their houses in Tacapāl and Golmāḍhī tols.

Brahmins, Chathariya, and Pañcthariya castes are thus centered around the new palace : cf. the belt given on the map in Plate 14 above, p. 48. Of course, with the centre of gravitation, the king himself, being gone now for more than two hundred years, a certain slackening of the rules is but to be expected. Still, the crescents or semicircles that enclose the palace have kept very well. There is just one Brahmin family in the entire east of the town; and only a very few Chathariyas, who by caste used to be directly connected with the court, have settled along the eastern part of the main road, probably in pursuance of the necessities of trade.

The distribution sketched in the preceding has left its mark in the region covered by our Elevation. The royal palace of course is in Lāskū ḍhokā and thus beyond the territory covered here. Still, in a sense Kingship is represented by the Nyātapola Pagoda. This is not accessible to the general public, being sacred to Siddhilakṣmī[2]

1) A few Chathariya households are found in Golmāḍhī tol, east of this belt. We do not think it likely that they are relics of the old court in Tacapāl tol.

2) Information on the godhead of this temple is very hard to come by. OLDFIELD (1.134) and LÉVI (1. 378f.) give Talejū Bhavānī as gooddess of the Nyātapola. This is very probably incorrect; Talejū has her temple within the precincts of the Lāskū ḍhokā palace.- The ascription of the Nyātapola to Siddhilakṣmī is common local knowledge; see also L. Munaṃkarmī, Mallakālīn Nepāl (Kathmandu 1968), p. 54f. - The distinction between the tutelary goddess of the family (kuladevatā) and that of the individual (iṣṭadevatā) is not without its problems : loc. cit. p. 59 Tulajā Bhavānī is given as Bhupatīndramalla's iṣṭedevatā.

Plate 10.
[Opposite page:]
Bisket Jātrā : Section though Taumādhī Square from north to south. Scale 1:400
The chariot of Bhairava, with a stiff pole and two huge wooden wheels, carrying a two-storey wooden pagoda, stands in front of the temple of Bhairavnāth. Four ropes about ten metres long have been fixed to the pole. Fifty men form two parties, 25 from the Lower and 25 from the Upper Town. Each party seizes two ropes and attempts to pull the chariot into their part of the city. Only Jyāpus are privileged to take part in this ceremony. The contest takes part before the chariot goes to Gaḥ hiti.

1327, 43 M.
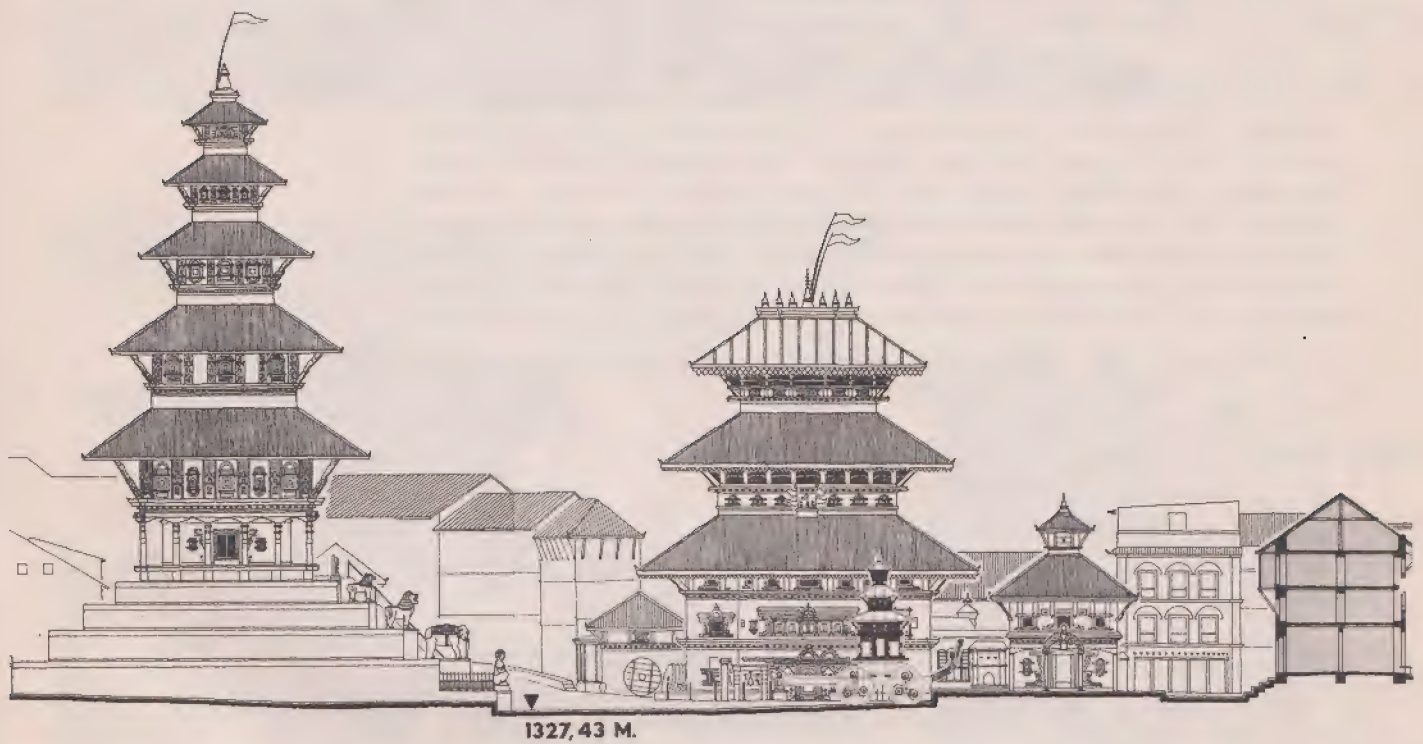
0 1 2 3 4 5   10M

whom, it is said, King Bhupatīndramalla had adopted as his tutelary goddess (*is-tadevatā*). Taken in the strict sense of the term, the temple thus should not have been associated with Kingship. Nevertheless, this association seems to have taken place : even the Rāṇās, people say, used to have rituals performed there.

Opposite the Bhairavnāth temple we find a house of three storeys, belonging to a Chathariya (Dhaubhaḍel) family. This is one of the largest houses of the town : only two houses of Pradhānāṅgas in Baṃṣagopāl (Tekhāco Ward), and two Kā-yastha (Kasaju) houses in Khaumā ward are bigger. - Both its front and its inner courtyard show most elaborately carved windows, doors, and passages. Its ground plan is rectangular, the sides measuring 22 by 25 m, including side wings. The compound includes a garden in northerly direction. The ground plan is given on Plate 5, upper right, p 24.For the topography of the Dhaubhaḍel settlement, see Plate 15.

In Lāykve, we enter a Jyāpu (peasants') quarter. Jyāpus are the backbone of Bhaktapur, comprising more than 60 per cent of its population. In the social hierarchy, they are the group following upon the Pañcthariya[1].

Jyāpus as a rule live in three-storey houses, too, though their ground plan is on a much more limited scale. Embellishments of houses (mostly carvings and strutted roofs) are fairly frequent, but much less grand than those of Chathariya houses. The ground plan (Map II) shows that this area is almost intolerably crowded: plots only 12 ft wide imply middle openings of 8 by 8 ft, light shafts rather than court-yards. The congestion in this area approaches that of the closest quarters of Tōkyō or Hongkong : in Tacapāl, with a similar population pattern, there are 222 inhabitants per acre, the relation of floor space to ground area being 2.3. Overcrowding

1) For the purposes of this rough survey, the two Śivācārya households who are placed between the Pañcthariya and the Jyāpu have been omitted.

Plate 11.

[Opposite page:]
Bisket Jātrā. Yahsiṃkhel
Above : *Yahsiṃkhel, seen from across the river. Evenly structured roofs form a whole; their level rises gradually with ground and caste.*

The middle of Yahsiṃkhel is marked by the Cyāsilimmaṇḍap, which formerly was a three-storeyed edifice. Today, it is a pavilion of one storey, rising over an octagonal ground plan and placed on a two-storey pedestal.
*On New Year's Eve, a high wooden pole ('liṅga'; newārī Yahsiṃ) is raised on top of a mound of boulders which is situated to the right of the maṇḍap. As soon as this is done, the Bhairava image is taken from its chariot and placed in the open hall. Here it is venerated on New Year's Day (**lower left**), after worshippers have taken their bath in Cupiṅ Ghāṭ (**lower right**). - On the right side, a sloped ramp leads up to the maṇḍap; a staircase is found to its left, leading down to the level of Yahsiṃkhel.*

This rite, which takes about 12 hours, is the only time Cyāsilimmaṇḍap is used during the entire year.

has taken a decided turn towards the worse only during the present generation. The block called Malāca provides an illustration. Joint families have broken up, and there are now sixteen households where there were ten only thirty years ago. For this development, see the maps on Plate 16, middle and below.

Untouchables are the lowest group of castes represented in the Elevation. Most of them live beyond the pale, which probably meant outside the boundary of the town. Indeed, the location of their dwellings in some instances is evidence for assuming past borders. This is quite clear e.g. from the location of Kasāī (butchers') dwellings. As was mentioned before (p. 21), the centre of present–day Bhaktapur is enclosed by a *pradakṣiṇāpatha*, a way of circumambulation, which keeps the centre of the town *to its right*. Most of Kasāī houses are situated on the very streets used for the *pradakṣiṇā* : but in circumambulation they are always *to the left* (see map on Plate 14, below, p. 48). Though butchers functionally were part of the city, they could not be included in the area sanctified by circumambulation.

The only group of untouchables that in olden times was permitted to live inside the *pradakṣiṇāpatha* boundary were the Kusle ('tailors'), who are also called *jugi* (*yogi*) from their connection with the Gorakhnāth cult[1]. Their habitat results from their function as 'ward people' (*tvaḥ jaṃ*) which they maintain to this very day. Every ward has to have its own Kusle who e.g. have to be called in connection with the rites attending death. Thus, this exception does not invalidate the general rule for the settlement of untouchables.

The chief group of untouchables between Taumāḍhī Square and Maśān Ghāṭ are the Pore ('fishermen') : 73 households forming a compact area immediately to the east of our axis. Their dwellings are easily recognized not only from their external appearance (see Plate 6, p. 30), but also from the fact that Pore houses usually stand by themselves, while houses of Jyāpus are usually built serially, forming connected blocks.

2.3.2. RITUAL EMBEDDING

A glance at Map II shows a great many important religious buildings situated on our axis; indeed, no other topographically comparable region can vie with it in richness of religious endowment. All castes take part in ritual involving our area, as do both creeds, Hinduism and Buddhism. For it is not only buildings that manifest the unique status of our sector: all processions which are undertaken in Bhaktapur cross the Taumāḍhī Square - Maśān Ghāṭ axis.

In the succeeding, we shall list buildings and processions with scarcely any commentary, reserving a full treatment to our more comprehensive account.

1) For this, see G.W. BRIGGS : Gorakhnāth and the Kāṇphaṭa Yogis. Calcutta 1938.

BUILDINGS

One of the models Hinduism employs for the sanctification of space is configurations of shrines or temples dedicated to a particular, systematic group of gods or goddesses. Such shrines cannot be fully understood unless interpreted with reference to the entire system of which they form a part.

Systems of this type very often are eightfold. In such cases shrines are located in the four cardinal and the four intermediate points of the compass. Probably such patterns are to be understood as extensions of the old *dikpāla* idea : the Eight Regions or Quarters are guarded each by a particular god[1]. No doubt the new gods were also installed to protect the Quarters and thus assumed the function of the old Guardians; yet it is fairly certain that their function was not exhausted with this.

Such systems had to be imposed onto a town that existed already. Hence, the sites of temples or *pīths* are of course conditioned by factors of topography : we do not find the ideal, symmetrical pattern of a well-executed *yantra* or *maṇḍala*. The variations that actual localities will show do not, however, justify doubt in the principle underlying the spatial arrangement. Some patterns, as the Eight Mothers (*Aṣṭamātṛkā*), seem to be fairly recent. When erecting their *pīths*, and determining their sites, priests obviously could not start from scratch, but had to fit them in the best way possible. Thus, deviations from an ideal distributions are but the natural outcome of historical conditions[2].

The Taumāḍhī Square - Maśān Ghāṭ area participates in all systems of the type described that we have so far traced in Bhaktapur. The edifices which tie our area into the whole of the city are summarized in the following table.

GROUP	ITEM
Trikuṇḍa Gaṇeś	Cālākhu Gaṇeś
Cār Nārāyaṇ	Tilamādhava
Aṣṭamātṛkā	Vaiṣṇavī[3]
Aṣṭabhairava	Krodhabhairava
Aṣṭagaṇeś	Bandi Bināyak[4]
Daśamahāvidyā	Chinnamastā[5]
	Bhuvaneśvarī[5], Kālī[6], Tārā[6]

1) A very common list is found in Manu (5.96): *Indra* in the east, *Agni* in the southeast, *Yama* in the south, *Nirṛti* in the southwest, *Varuṇa* in the west, *Vāyu* in the northwest, *Kubera* in the north, and *Soma* in the northeast.

2) The procedure is well described by DUTT (1925, p. 67) : 'If the master-builder had to improve, reconstruct, or extend an old existing town [....] he had to take a historical survey of the shrines, buildings, or reservoirs of historical importance and traditional sanctity. And he had to project how he could best carry out his duties without violently dislocating the existing order.'

3) Also called Bhadrakālī

4) Located in Taumāḍhī Square

5) Located in Yaḥsiṃkhel

6) Located in Maśān Ghāṭ

CIRCUMAMBULATIONS AND PROCESSIONS

All processions of Bhaktapur pass the Taumāḍhī axis.; thus we find

1. The main *pradakṣiṇāpatha*. This crosses Taumāḍhī Square from east to west.

2. *Dasaiṅ*. On the evening of the fourth day of Durgāpūjā, the inhabitants of Bhaktapur will go to Yaḥsiṃkhel, via our axis, in order to venerate Bhadrakālī-Vaiṣṇavī in her *pīṭh*. The morning after, they take a ritual bath in Cupiṅ Ghāṭ, on the northern bank of the Hanumante River.

3. *Dyo Svagaṃ bīyegu* 'to give Ṭīkā to the gods'. On the fourth day of the New Year, idols of all the gods who accept animal sacrifices are fetched from their houses (*dyocheṅ*) to be venerated in public. This is part of the Bisket Jātrā festivities. Bhadrakālī's place is in an arcade (*pauvā*) in the northwestern corner of Taumāḍhī Square. The Bhairava idol is carried to Lākulācheṅ Square; Betāl is adored on the pole of the big Bhairava Chariot at the time when it is stationed in Gaḥ hiti.

4. *Ñā lākegu* ('Catching fish'). Between Dasaiṅ and May, before the monsoon, the *gāthā* (woodcutters), impersonating the Navadurgā, perform dances, part of which is the playful attempt to catch children; hence the name of the rite. They dance in altogether forty places, twenty-one of which are located within the precincts of Bhaktapur proper, while nineteen others lie in villages or little towns which belonged to the Kingdom of Bhatgaon during the 16th century. The ninth place within the Bhaktapur series is in front of the big Bhairavnāth temple in Taumāḍhī Square; the twelfth is on Gaḥhiti.

5. *Dīpaṃkarapatha*. On Śrāvaṇ 4 (July/August), five Buddha images, all bearing the name *Dīpaṃkara*, and coming from the main *bahals* ('monasteries') of Bhaktapur, are carried round the city. Their last halting place, the 35 th, is on the platform (*dabu*) in front of the Bhairavnāth temple in Taumāḍhī Square[1].

6. *Cibhapūjā*. In the month of Śrāvaṇ, Bhaktapur Buddhists visit all Buddhist monuments of their town. After leaving the Caturvarṇamahāvihāra, they go towards Tālāco, passing the Nārāyaṇa courtyard in Taumāḍhī.

Though the sequence of temples poses quite a few problems of detail, the general outline is fairly clear, the starting and terminal points being clearly set off from each other. Taumāḍhī Square holds three very impressive and large scale buildings sacred

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1) Strangely enough, the *Dīpaṃkarapatha* goes round the city counter-clockwise.

Plate 12.

[*Opposite page:*]
Bisket Jātrā : Betāl on his platform in Taumāḍhī Square
For about half an hour, Betāl is worshipped on this dabu. His image is raised in copper and about the size of a child. He is much feared as the mount (vāhana) of Bhairava and said to be very troublesome. The year over, he is tied face down to beams of the topmost floor of his house (dyocheṅ), which is situated directly behind (i.e. east of) the Bhairavnāth temple.

When tied to the pole of Bhairava's chariot, the Betāl image is very prettily adorned.

to the chief gods of Mediaeval Hinduism : to Śiva in his Bhairava aspect (Bhairavnāth temple), to Devī (the Nyātɑpola Pagoda), and to Viṣṇu Nārāyaṇa. Maśān Ghāṭ, on the other hand, has nothing but unambitious structures, most of them holy to what in CROOKE's happy term are godlings : to Bhīmsen, and to the God of Earthquakes, Bhūkadyo. The sequence does not reflect actual patterns of worship, but it does seem to mirror, in its own way, the concept of hierarchy which we have encountered in the gradual decrease of the status of the population : the manifestations of gods who have been placed at the centre are more remote, and hierarchically higher, than those at the borders of our area.

It is interesting to observe that in worship temples which form part of a system are yet often treated individually : Bhadrakālī/Vaiṣṇavī e.g. can be revered without reference to the other 'Mothers'. Possibly, not very many people were conscious of the system as such : knowledge may originally have been restricted to the limited circle of literate practitioners of the occult.

BISKET JĀTRĀ :   THE AXIS AS NEUTRAL TERRITORY

The Taumādhī Square - Cupiṅ Ghāṭ area is the scene of the most important festival of Bhaktapur. This is the New Year Festival, called Bisket Jātrā. Its celebration includes performances which are of interest to an attempt to gauge the function of our axis.

From the legends told about its origin[1], Bisket Jātrā is essentially a fertility rite. The two chief ritual performances are the raising of a huge wooden pole in the mound near the Cyāsilimmaṇḍap (in Yaḥsiṃkhel, see Plate 11, p. 40 lower left), and the collision between the two temple chariots involved, those of Bhadrakālī and of Bhairava (Plate 9, upper right, p. 36). Both can be understood as re-enactments of primal procreation : Bhairava of course is an aspect of Śiva, and Bhadrakālī[2]

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1) The largest collection of Bisket Jātrā legends is M. ANDERSON's : see her *The Festivals of Nepal* (London 1971), pp. 41-49.
2) A problem we cannot solve at present is posed by the double designation of the Aṣṭamātṛkā pīṭh in Yaḥsiṃkhel. Within the Aṣṭamātṛkā context, its goddess invariably goes by the name of Vaiṣṇavī, with reference to Bisket Jātrā, she is always Bhadrakālī.

Plate 13.

[*Opposite page:*]
Bisket Jātrā : Krodhabhairava
Krodhabhairava is one of the Eight Bhairavas (Aṣṭabhairava) of Bhaktapur, who are related to the Eight Mothers (Aṣṭamātṛkā); he belongs to Bhadrakālī. He manifests himself in the shape of a large stone embedded into the pavement of the main road in the very place where the lane branches off that leads to the pīṭh of Bhadrakālī via Gaḥ hiti.

On the fourth day of the New Year, a face is painted onto the stone, and Krodhabhairava is venerated during the circumambulation of that day (Dyo Svagaṃ bīyegu).

is taken as his śakti (female energy) by Bhaktapur Tāntriks. Again, everybody knows the pole which is raised near the Cyāsilim maṇḍap by the name of *liṅga* (phallus), and surely it is not a far-fetched theory to view the mound in which the pole is raised as a symbol of the *yoni*. [1]

Now, local tradition divides Bhaktapur into two parts, the Upper and the Lower Town (*thane* and *kvane*, respectively, in Newārī). The division is not very prominent in the sense that it will not strike the casual observer; it does, however, appear very distinctly during Bisket Jātrā.

When the chariot of Bhairava has reached Gaḥ hiti, four ropes are tied to it, two each to front and back. In the meantime, two parties of Jyāpus (peasants) have been formed, each of 25 men, one from the Upper and one from the Lower Town. Then 'the inhabitants of the upper part of town vie with those from the lower in a hair-raising tug-of-war, each side straining with all their might at ropes tied fore and aft, while swarming mobs of celebrators cheer and shout in their midst. Swaying and bouncing precariously, the towering chariot is yanked this way and that until one team finally succeeds in moving it in their direction.' [2]

The purpose of this ritualized context is quite clear : each party tries to pull the God into their part of the city to ensure 'good fortune for their townsmen during the coming year' [3]. The interesting thing is the location of the rite.

One should expect the contest to take place on *neutral ground*. If Gaḥ hiti was counted as either *kvane* or *thane*, this would as it were give an undue advantage to one of the parties in the struggle.

Today, most people say Taumādhī tol is part of the Lower Town. This attribution is obvious in view of the many buildings of Taumādhī Square that were erected by kings residing from the new palace, i.e. after 1453. In that division, Taumādhī is the eastern most tol of *kvane*; there is no doubt that the wards adjoining Taumādhī in the east (Kvāchem̐, Tibukchem̐) belong to the Upper Town.

1) We owe this suggestion to J. PIEPER.- The mound goes by the name *Yaḥsimpvā* 'hole of the *liṅga*'.
2) ANDERSON : Festivals of Nepal (London 1971), p. 44.
3) *loc. cit.*

Plate 14.

[*Opposite page:*]
Patterns of Settlement : Highest and lowest castes.
Above : *Clans of Chathariya and Pañcthariya castes, i.e. those who were functionally connected with the royal court, still have their quarters in Lower Bhaktapur, forming a circular belt around the new palace in Lāskū ḍhokā. Some members of these castes have settled along the main roads, the centre of Bhaktapur trade. The shift of emphasis between the two centres of Plate 4 is borne out by the pattern of Brahmin, Chathariya and Pañcthariya settlement. Active extension has long been confined to the Lower Town.*

Below : *The Kasāī (butchers) and the Poṛe (fishermen; see Plate 6) are untouchables. Contact with them was polluting; hence, their poor dwellings lie outside the city's hierarchy, and in their place of settlement, they demonstrate that, within an immobile and hierarchically ordered society, a town is a closed system.*
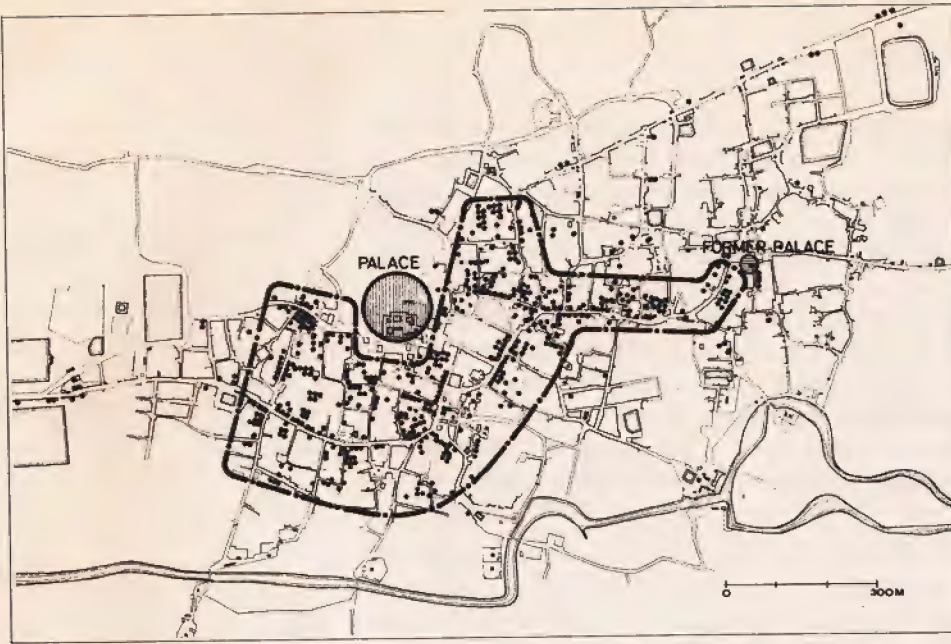
Distribution of Chathariya
and Pancthariya households
in relation to the palace.
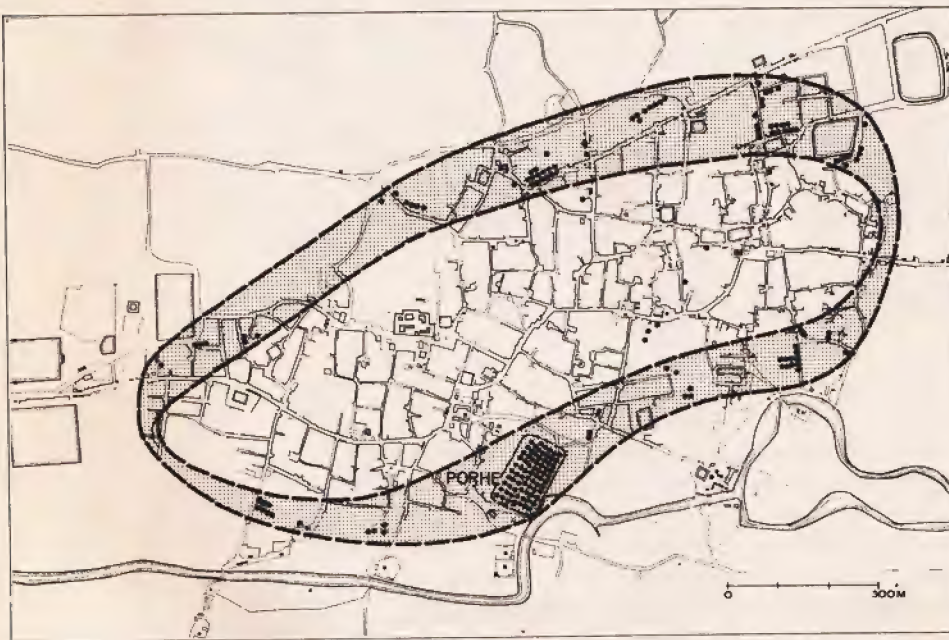
Distribution of Kasai house-
holds and Porhe in realtion
to urban space.

We feel ritual indicates that this division is due to some re-structuring of the city. In its present state, Taumādhī Square owes a great deal to Bhupatīndramalla : he built the Nyatapola: he reconstructed the Bhairavnāth Temple, giving it its present shape; he had the big *sattal* erected where nowadays they keep the parts of the Bhairava Chariot. It was also Bhupatīndramalla who installed the Bhairava-Bha-drakālī Chariot rite that forms such an essential part of Bisket Jātrā celebrations.[1]) All this might have been intended to bridge the conflict between the Upper and the Lower Town that has left its traces to this very day: by installing a ritualized contest, the sting is, as it were, taken from the rivalry. On this reading, the profuse religious endowment of Taumādhī Square could be understood as a device to unify the town by installing a third centre which connects Eastern Tacapāl and Western Lāskū dhokā. Erecting the highest building of Bhaktapur in the very place where the two parts meet seems tantamount to an affirmation of the unity of the town.

Such, then, are the barest outlines of a network of myth and ritual that permits, and indeed demands, historical interpretation. Old customs still prevailing, old legends still alive and awaiting collection, provide a wealth of material for secular and religious history. Yet this is but one aspect of the use such research can be put to. A town like Bhaktapur is the scene of a functioning social system. It is a body very essentially related to space in the sense that certain holy or semi-sacred locatilies will as it were act as catalysts for social institutions that directly serve the needs of the populace. Such institutions, if judged by secular standards, may not serve the community with maximum efficiency, nor provide relief that can be considered sufficient. Even so, at present there are no alternative models to replace them. And for an outsider, it is very difficult to estimate what such institutions may offer that transcends material needs.

1) See L. Munaṃkarmī, Mallakālīn Nepāl, p. 54.

Plate 15.

[*Opposite page:*]
Taumādhī Square – Maśān Ghāṭ Area : Dhaubhaḍel, Tamakhu, and Lohalā houses.
Of a total of 24 Dhaubhaḍel households in Bhaktapur, 21 are found in the Tau-māḍhī Square - Gaḥ hiti area .The Dhaubhaḍel originally were members of the royal family. Legend says that in order to escape Pṛthivīnārāyaṇ's officers, their ancestor was disguised as a dealer in curds, assuming a low-caste profession to save his life. Their original status was restored to his descendants.- The Dhaubhaḍel ancestral seat in Taumāḍhī Square (see Plate 5) has been cut up into six sections through division by inheritance. Members of the Dhaubhaḍel clan (phuki) have their own Āgaṃcheṁ within their compound; it was built around 1850. For wor-ship on Diwali day, they have their digudyo beyond the river.

Settlement in close groups is not confined to caste, as is seen from two sub-groups of Jyāpus (peasants) : the Tamakhu (22 households, all in Lākulācheṁ and Lāykve) and the Lohalā (31 households, all in Taumāḍhī). In Poṛe ward (Plate 14, below), we see untouchables follow the same pattern.
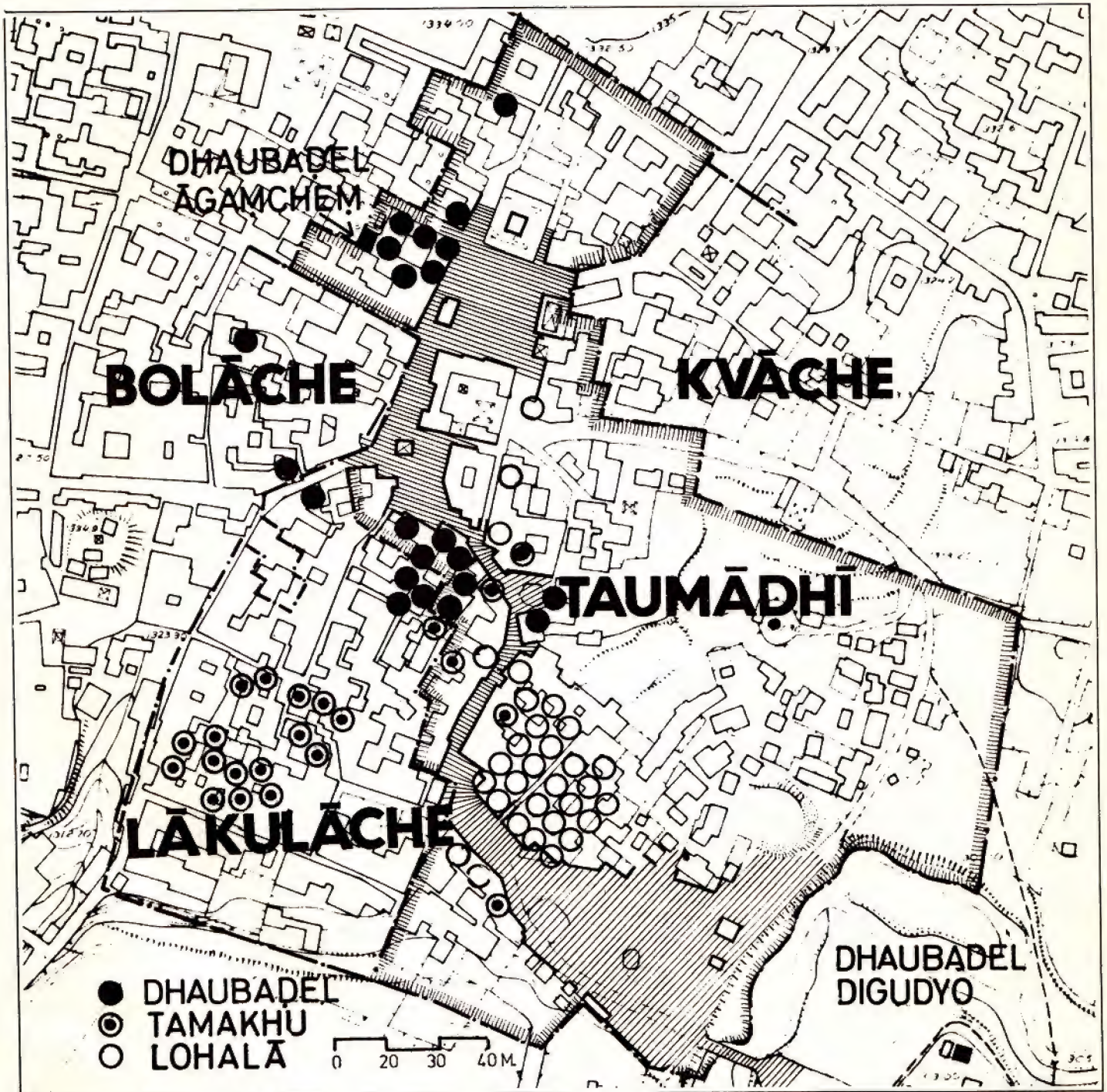
DHAUBADEL
ĀGAMCHEM

BOLĀCHE

KVĀCHE

TAUMĀḌHĪ

LĀKULĀCHE

DHAUBADEL
DIGUDYO

● DHAUBADEL
◉ TAMAKHU
○ LOHALĀ

0   20   30   40 M.

Plate 16.

[Opposite page:]
**Housing in Taumāḍhī Ward, southern part : Khāṁlā and Malācā neighbourhoods.
Scale 1 : 1000.**

Above: *Malācā may go back to the settlement of a single Lohalā-family grouped
around a large courtyard. Today, the area is extremely densely populated. Lots
are very small (8 by 33 ft); houses sometimes have light shafts rather than
courtyards, the smallest covering an area of 11 sq ft only.*

Middle and below : *Questioning of inhabitants during March, 1974 unearthed the
fact that thirty years ago, Malācā was divided into ten lots, the position of which
is shown in the* **middle** *ground plan. Nowadays, there are sixteen (ground plan*
below)*. Joint families have disintegrated owing to the increasing economic
importance of cash and to quarrels about inheritance. Small but autonomous
households have developed, all possessing their own kitchen and house gods.*

*Houses are divided vertically, not horizontally. In extreme cases, of the paternal
house a son will obtain but an axis a window wide. Extremely narrow staircases
have to be fitted in to gain access to upper rooms. -*

*Apart from Lohalā families, Malācā at present has one Hākuduvā and one
Cusyāki family. The smallest lot marked by K in the map is accessible only
through a low and dark passage. It has been rented out to a Kau (blacksmith).*
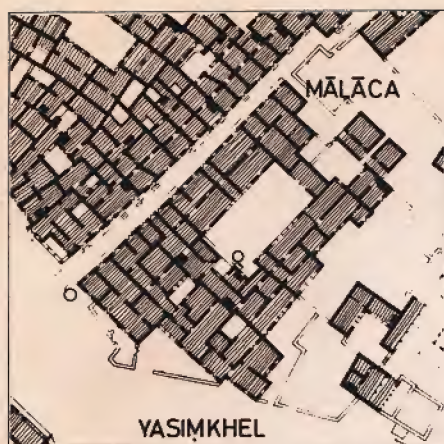
ground floor plan. Descrip-
tion of environment.

Lohala households two ge-
nerations ago:10 households

Lohala households in 1974:
16.households.

3. APPENDIX

List of Bhaktapur Castes

Preliminary Remarks

During March, 1974, 5216 households were surveyed in Bhaktapur with the view to determine their caste membership. This survey aimed at *establishing the spatial distribution* of castes within the city. This is of course but one aspect of social dynamics; we have selected it because of its bearing upon the elucidation of Hindu ideas about towns, since we feel that, given the aims of our study, this is evidence which cannot possibly be disregarded.

The limitations enumerated in the following are essential for an interpretation of the data within the restricted scope of the present essay.

1. When asked about caste, some people will give a name that superficially conceals rather than discloses caste menbership. This is especially frequent with Jyāpus (peasants). The procedure may well have begun some generations ago. In this way, we obtain designations based upon names of localities (e.g. *takhācheṁ* 'big house'). Other names may indicate issue from an intercaste marriage, like *Kasalavaḥ* (from *Kasaju* 'scribe' and *Lavaḥ* 'a group of Jyapūs'). A third group refers to personal characteristics of an ancestor, as *Ligiligi* 'very thin man', or *Jaṭādhāri* commonly explained as 'wearer of a beard' rather than as 'wearing matted hair' etc. *Nepālī* names will occur, especially in the group mentioned last, as *Jaṭādhāri* shows.

   Checking this information with Brahmins permitted us to assign bearers of such names to their proper place in the hierarchy. Within the scope of the present project, it was not possible to reconfirm the Brahmins' attributions. This could of course be achieved through careful and indirect enquiries with neighbours etc. Nowadays, the very term *jyāpu* (peasant) is not free from depreciatory connotations. Thus, enquiries will often result in the label *Kisān*, which is the *Nepālī* word for 'peasant'. In 83 cases, replies of this type have been taken at face value.

2. There are no published accounts of caste in Bhaktapur. Gopal Singh NEPALI 1965 does at time illustrate his tenets by Bhaktapur materials; but neither his attempt at classifications, nor those of Colin ROSSER and Luciano PETECH can be applied to Bhaktapur. It seems that every town in the Valley has peculiarities of its own, and each system will have to be described separatedly before a typology valid for all Newars can be established.

3. The hierarchical order given in the list in much indebted to the results of ROBERT LEVY, of the University of California at San Diego. During 1973/74, in collaboration with Brahmins he worked out a hierarchy which is to some degree extended by the materials collected under the present project. Professor LEVY readily shared his materials and results; we acknowledge his liberality with gratitude.

The list groups together castes who are endogamous and can share boiled rice, but will accept only beaten rice and water from members of the group below them. Water cannot be accepted from members of Group 13 (*Bha* etc.). Group 14 and those below are untouchables.

Rough as it is, the present sketch does enable us to translate social order onto maps, and to interpret the emerging pattern. A detailed description of differences in status and in ritual obligations will be a task for an anthropologist.

Newar Status System From the Rājopādhyā Point of View

Jat Name	Number of Households	Traditional Occupation	Area of Residence
1. Brahman	26	priest	Lāskū ḍhokā
2. Chathariya	545	occupations in relation to the court	lower town, Tulāchem Cochem
Jośī	44	astrologer	Bolāchem
Malla, Pradhānānga	63	merchant(royal fam)	Bamśagopāl, lower town
Hādā, Hoḍā, Rāithor, Rāyo	53	occupations in relation to the court	lower town, Lāskū ḍhokā
Amātya, Bhau, Kasaju	93	ministers	Khaumā, Tekhāco, Tibukchem
Tācābhārī, Munankarmī, Rāj-bhaṇḍārī, Gomga, Dhaubārī, Pakuvām, Tīmīlā, Baidyu, Khe-golī, Basī and 11 others	292	occupation in relation to the court	lower town, Golmāḍhī
3. Pañcthariya	199	Tāntric priests	
Ācāju(Karmācārya)	68	tāntric priests debased Chathariya	Tulāchem lower town
Māske	5		
Madhīkarmī	16	merchants	scattered
Banepālī	10	merchants	Tacapāl
Cāngubhārī	4	merchants	Bholāchem
Yāmcā, Dristī, Khaki, Barya and 16 others	96	merchants	lower town, Golmāḍhī
4. Tīnī (Śivācārya)	2	Arranging the purifying fire on the 11th day after death	
5. Jyāpu (first group)	1 502	farmers	all over the town
Suvāl	246	farmers	all over the town

Bāsukalā	29	farmers	Byāsī
Khoju	149	farmers	all over the town
Ācāju	50	farmers	Tulāchem̐, Mam̐galāchem̐
Kharbujā	18	farmers	Tekhāco
Duvāl and 78 others	131	farmers	all over the town
6. Tāmā (Tāmrakār)	15	coppersmith	Tibukchem̐
7. Kumā (Prajāpatī)	410	potters	Taulāchem, Tālāco
Āvāl	80	brick makers and masons	Tekhāco, Cochem̐
8. Jyāpu (Second group)	1 192	farmers	all over the town
Rājchal, Cauguthī, Muguthī	53	farmers and ritual duties in Taleju	lower town, Tekhāco
Śilpakār	157	carpenters	Tekhāco, Khaumā, Gol- mādhī, Jem̐lā
Loham̐karmī	11	stone masons	Tekhāco
Lohalā	31	farmers	Taumādhī-Malācā
Tamakhu and 171 others	22	farmers	Lākulāchem̐
		farmers	all over the town
9. Tulādhar	1	merchants	Taumādhī
10. Chyo (Phasīkha)	4	give fire to the pyre	Kvāchem̐
11. Chipi (claiming higher status)	375	merchants	all over the town
Sākhakarmī	37	merchants	Bolāchem̐
Ulak	15	merchants	Tacapāl
Bhuju	33	merchants	Tekhāco, Mam̐galāchem̐
Śrestha and 9 others	224	merchants, govern- ment officers	all over the town
12. Duīm̐	1	carriers	Taumādhī
13. Each group forming a separate unit, but considered on the same ritual level			
Gāthā (Banmālā)	45	farmers, devotees of the Nava Durgā	Ināco, Golmādhī, Kvāthamḍau
Bhā (Karāmijt)	15	funeral bearers	Golmādhī, Itāchem̐
Cālam̐ (Divākar)	13	funeral torch bearers	Tulāchem̐
Katah (Suddhakār)	2	cutters of umbili- cal cord on the 3rd day	Tulāchem̐, Golmādhī
Khusah	1	palanquin bearer	Kvāthamḍau
Nau (Nāpit)	37	barbers	Yāchem̐ etc.
Kau (Nakarmī)	22	blacksmiths	Jem̐lā
Pum̐ (Citrakār)	20	painters	Tacapāl, Taumādhī
Sāymi (Mānandhar)	129	oil pressers	Tacapāl, Golmādhī, Tekhāco
Chipā (Rañjitkār)	66	dyers	Golmādhī

14.	Jugi (Kusle)	46	tailors, temple musicians	all over the town
15.	Dhobī	2	washermen	Taumāḍhī
16.	Nāy (Kasāī)	110	butchers	on the outskirts of the town
17.	Kulu	1	drum-makers	Cochem
18.	Poṛe	73	sweepers, basket-makers, fishers	Taumāḍhī
19.	Hālāhulu	1	sweeper	Taumāḍhī

Beside the caste system there are the following groups :

1.	Gubhaju (Bajrāchārya) and Bare (Sakya)	209	Buddhist priests and goldsmiths	Kvāthaṃḍau, Bhārbāco Taumāḍhī, Ināco
2.	Non-Newar Brahman Miśra, Jhā	21	Hindu priest	Itāchem̐, Khaumā, Yālāchem̐
3.	Maṭh-Mahantas Giri, Puri, Jāgam	5	Mahantas	Tapacāl, Taumāḍhī
4.	Gāine	6	non-Newar musicians	Bholāchem̐
5.	Śārki	5	shoe-maker	Bhārbāco, Kvāthaṃḍau
6.	Muslim	3	ornament makers	Bhārbāco
7.	Members of other ethnic groups Tāmang, Thāpa, Rāṇa	10		

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